

PERSONAL TRAITS OF
BRITISH AUTHORS

SCOTT—HOGG—CAMPBELL—CHALMERS
WILSON—DE QUINCEY—JEFFREY

EDITED BY

EDWARD T. MASON

WITH PORTRAITS

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1885



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PREFACE.

THE names upon the title-page, Scott, Hogg, Campbell, Chalmers, Wilson, De Quincey, and Jeffrey, tell their own story; and any remarks upon the general design and scope of this volume would be quite superfluous. The Englishman, De Quincey, has been admitted to this group of Scotchmen, in order that he might not be separated from his hearty friend, "Christopher North."

Extracts have been made from the following American copyrighted books: Robert Tomes's "My College Days" (Harper & Bros., New York, 1880); Frances Anne Kemble's "Records of a Girlhood" (Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1879); George Ticknor's "Life, Letters, and Journals," 2 vols. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, 1876); R. Shelton Mackenzie's "Life of Scott" (Boston, 1871); and the same author's edition of "Noctes Ambrosianæ," 5 vols. (New York, 1854); Washington Irving's "Crayon Miscellany" (issued in various edi-

tions by G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York) ; Pierre M. Irving's "Life of Washington Irving," 4 vols. (G. P. Putnam & Son, New York, 1863-64) ; N. P. Willis's "Famous Persons and Places" (Charles Scribner, New York, 1854) ; *The Atlantic Monthly* (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston). Permission was kindly granted to make selections from these works, and the courtesy of their respective owners is thankfully acknowledged.

CHRONOLOGY.

Born.		Died.
1770. ¹	HOGG.	1835.
1771.	SCOTT.	1832.
1773.	JEFFREY.	1850.
1777.	CAMPBELL.	1844.
1780.	CHALMERS.	1847.
1785.	WILSON.	1854.
—	DE QUINCEY.	1859.

¹ Hogg himself said that he was born on January 25th, 1772. January 25th having been the date of Burns's birth ; but the parish register of Hogg's native place gives December 9th, 1770, as the date of his birth, and this must be held the better evidence.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

1771-1832.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

SCOTT was socially the most popular literary man of his time. The charm of his manner fascinated all. The personal devotion which he inspired as a man was quite as notable as the fame which he won by his writings. All the records of intercourse with him tell substantially the same story, and show us a man exceptionally attractive and lovable. The only serious controversy which has arisen, concerning Scott's personal character, grew out of his unfortunate business connection with James and John Ballantyne.¹

The spirit which animated so large a part of his literary work was also the ruling passion of his life—enthusiastic devotion to feudal principles, and

¹ It is impossible to enter upon this matter in the present volume. The subject may be studied in Lockhart, and in the following works: "A Refutation of Misstatements respecting the Messrs. Ballantyne" (a pamphlet published in 1838); John Gibson's "Reminiscences of Sir Walter Scott" (Edinburgh, 1871); and Thomas Constable's memoir of his father, Archibald Constable, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1873). There is an intelligent summary of the points at issue in the ninth chapter of Mr. Hutton's volume upon Scott, in the "English Men of Letters" series.

the desire to realize and perpetuate the worn out usages of feudal life. His destiny was shaped by an impracticable whim, which was barely redeemed from vulgarity by the sincere and romantic loyalty of the devotee, and which betrayed him into an absurd excess of reverence for that least kingly of all British monarchs—George the Fourth. Despite his Christian principles and his strong common-sense, this whim made him ready to expose himself to the duellist's bullet; and to the ambition born of it he sacrificed health and happiness, making shipwreck of mind, body, and estate. Carlyle states the case none too strongly, when he says, "Alas, Scott, with all his health, was *infected*; rick of the fearfulest malady, that of Ambition! To such length had the King's baronetcy, the world's favor and 'sixteen parties a day,' brought it with him. So the inane racket must be kept up, and rise ever higher. So masons labor, ditchers delve; and there is endless, altogether deplorable correspondence about marble-slabs for tables, wainscoting of rooms, curtains and the trimmings of curtains, orange-colored or fawn-colored. Walter Scott, one of the gifted of the world, whom his admirers call the most gifted, must kill himself that he may be a country gentleman, the founder of a race of Scottish lairds. It is one of the strangest, most tragical histories ever enacted under this sun. So poor a passion can lead so strong a man into such mad extremes. . . . Bookseller Constable's bankruptcy was not the ruin of Scott; his ruin was, that ambition, and even false ambition, had laid hold of him; that his way of life was not wise. Whither could it lead? Where could it stop? New

farms there remained ever to be bought, while new novels could pay for them. More and more success but gave more and more appetite, more and more audacity."

It may well be said—with no wish to emphasize a trite moral—that the tragedy of Scott's life was not in vain, for in that tragedy the real nobility of the man is first clearly revealed. There, for the first time, his character is seen to be heroic. In those dark days he rises to heights unknown to his smooth prosperity; and while we see him thwarted in the plans of a lifetime, baffled, bereft, dying prematurely, we yet own him victorious.

The array of books, which the student of Scott's life and character will find really useful, is formidable, and the following list is very far from being exhaustive: Lockhart's "Life of Scott;" Hogg's "Familiar Anecdotes of Scott;" R. S. Mackenzie's "Memoir of Scott;" Leslie's "Autobiographical Recollections;" Irving's "Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey;" L'Estrange's "Life of Harness;" J. C. Young's "Memoir of C. M. Young;" B. W. Procter's "Reminiscences;" and Dr. John Brown's "Horæ Subsecivæ" ("Spare Hours").

LEADING EVENTS OF SCOTT'S LIFE.

1771. Born, August 15th, in Edinburgh.
- 1779.—(Aged 8.) A scholar at the Edinburgh High School.
- 1783.—(Aged 12.) Enters Edinburgh University.
- 1786.—(Aged 15.) Apprenticed to his father, a Writer to the Signet.
- 1792.—(Aged 21.) Called to the bar.
- 1796.—(Aged 25.) Publishes a volume of translations from the German of Bürger.
- 1797.—(Aged 26.) Marries Miss Charlotte Margaret Carpenter.
- 1799.—(Aged 28.) Appointed Sheriff of Selkirkshire.
- 1802.—(Aged 31.) Publishes the first volumes of "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border."
- 1804.—(Aged 33.) Publishes "Sir Tristrem."
- 1805.—(Aged 34.) Publishes "The Lay of the Last Minstrel."
- 1806.—(Aged 35.) Appointed Clerk of Session at Edinburgh.
- 1808.—(Aged 37.) Publishes "Marmion."
- 1810.—(Aged 39.) Publishes "The Lady of the Lake." Visits the Scottish Hebrides.
- 1811.—(Aged 40.) Purchases Abbotsford. Publishes "The Vision of Don Roderick."
- 1813.—(Aged 42.) Publishes "Rokeby," and "The Bridal of Triermain."
- 1814.—(Aged 43.) Publishes "Waverley."
- 1815.—(Aged 44.) Publishes "The Lord of the Isles," and "Guy Mannering." Visits the Continent. Returns to Abbotsford.
- 1816.—(Aged 45.) Publishes "The Antiquary," and the first series of "Tales of my Landlord."
- 1818.—(Aged 47.) Publishes "Rob Roy," and the second series of "Tales of my Landlord."
- 1819.—(Aged 48.) Publishes "Ivanhoe," and the third series of "Tales of my Landlord."
- 1820.—(Aged 49.) Publishes "The Monastery," and "The Abbot." Receives a baronetcy.
- 1821.—(Aged 50.) Publishes "Kenilworth."

-
- 1822.—(Aged 51.) Publishes "The Pirate," and "The Fortunes of Nigel."
- 1823.—(Aged 52.) Publishes "Peveril of the Peak," "Quentin Durward," and "St. Ronan's Well."
- 1824.—(Aged 53.) Publishes "Redgauntlet."
- 1825.—(Aged 54.) Publishes "Tales of the Crusaders."
- 1826.—(Aged 55.) His wife dies. He becomes bankrupt. Publishes "Woodstock."
- 1827.—(Aged 56.) Publishes the "Life of Napoleon," the first series of "Chronicles of the Canongate," the first series of "Tales of a Grandfather." Acknowledges the authorship of the novels.¹
- 1828.—(Aged 57.) Publishes the second series of "Chronicles of the Canongate," and the second series of "Tales of a Grandfather."
- 1829.—(Aged 58.) Publishes the third series of "Tales of a Grandfather."
- 1830.—(Aged 59.) Publishes the fourth series of "Tales of a Grandfather." Suffers a stroke of paralysis. Resigns the Clerkship of Session.
- 1831.—(Aged 60.) Goes to the Continent. Publishes the fourth series of "Tales of my Landlord."
- 1832.—(Aged 61 years, 1 month.) Returns to England. Dies at Abbotsford, September 21st.
-

¹ This acknowledgment was made by Scott at a public dinner. An authoritative admission of his authorship of the novels had, however, been made in 1826, by his lawyer, Mr. John Gibson, in connection with the adjustment of his creditors' claims.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THERE are still living . . . two old women, who were in the domestic service at Sandy-Knowe, when the lame child was brought thither in the third year of his age. One of them, Tibby Hunter, remembers his coming well ; and that “ he was a sweet-tempered bairn, a darling with all about the house.” The young ewe-milkers delighted, she says, to carry him about on their backs among the crags ; and he was very “ gleg (quick) at the uptake, and soon kenned every sheep and lamb by head-mark as well as any of them.” . . . There is a story of his having been forgotten one day among the knolls when a thunder-storm came on ; and his aunt, suddenly recollecting his situation, and running out to bring him home, is said to have found him lying on his back, clapping his hands at the lightning, and crying out, “ Bonny, Bonny ! ” at every flash.—J. G. LOCKHART (“ Life of Scott ”).¹

Childhood.

I last night supped in Mr. Walter Scott's. He

¹ Lockhart (John Gibson). Life of Sir Walter Scott. 10 vols., 8vo. Edinburgh, 1839.

(Lockhart published an abridgment, in 1848, which contains some matter not in the original work.)

Precocity.

has the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw. He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on; it was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. He lifted his eyes and hands. "There's the mast gone," said he, "crash it goes!—they will all perish!" After his agitation, he turns to me. "That is too melancholy," says he; "I had better read you something more amusing." . . . When taken to bed last night, he told his aunt he liked that lady. "What lady?" says she. "Why, Mrs. Cockburn; for I think she is a virtuoso, like myself." "Dear Walter," says Aunt Jenny, "what is a virtuoso?" "Don't ye know? Why it's one who wishes and will know everything." Now sir you will think this a very silly story. Pray what age do you suppose this boy to be? . . . Why, twelve or fourteen. No such thing; he is not quite six years old.¹—MRS. COCKBURN (from a letter, quoted by Lockhart).

Recollections of a school-mate.

During some part of his attendance on the High School,² young Walter spent one hour daily at a small separate seminary of writing and arithmetic, kept by one Morton, where . . . young girls came for instruction as well as boys; and one of Mr. Morton's female pupils has been kind enough to set down some little reminiscences of Scott, who happened to sit at the same desk with herself. . . . "He attracted," Mrs. Churnside says, "the

¹ When this letter was written he was really in his seventh year.

² Scott was at this school from 1779 to 1783, from his eighth to his twelfth year.

regard and fondness of all his companions, for he was ever rational, fanciful, lively, and possessed of that urbane gentleness of manner, which makes its way to the heart. His imagination was constantly at work, and he often so engrossed the attention of those who learnt with him, that little could be done—Mr. Morton himself being forced to laugh as much as the little scholars at the odd turns and devices he fell upon; for he did nothing in the ordinary way. . . . He used also to interest us in a more serious way, by telling us the *visions* as he called them, which he had lying alone on the floor or sofa, when kept from going to church on a Sunday by ill health. Child as I was, I could not help being highly delighted with his description of the glories he had seen—his misty and sublime sketches of the regions above, which he had visited in his trance. Recollecting these descriptions, radiant and not gloomy as they were, I have often thought since, that there must have been a bias in his mind to superstition—the marvellous seemed to have such power over him, though the mere offspring of his own imagination, that the expression of his face, habitually that of genuine benevolence, mingled with a shrewd innocent humor, changed greatly while he was speaking of these things, and showed a deep intenseness of feeling, as if he were awed even by his own recital. . . . I may add, that in walking he used always to keep his eyes turned downwards as if thinking, but with a pleasing expression of countenance, as if enjoying his thoughts.”¹—J. G. LOCKHART (“Life of Scott”).

¹ See pp. 64, 65.

At school.

Lockhart emphatically denies the accuracy of those accounts of Scott's school-days, which presented him as a dull fellow, always at the foot of his class. He says, "His quick apprehension and powerful memory enabled him, at little cost of labor, to perform the usual routine of tasks, in such a manner as to keep him generally 'in a decent place' (as he once expressed it to Mr. Skene) 'about the middle of the class.' " He quotes Scott's own statement, — "I never was a dunce, nor thought to be so, but an incorrigibly idle imp, who was always longing to do something else than what was enjoined him." A school-fellow of Scott's says that their teacher "would constantly refer to him for dates, the particulars of battles, and other remarkable events alluded to in Horace, . . . and used to call him the historian of the class." At this time he was in his twelfth year.

*Ascendancy
over his
companions.*

Upon all these occasions¹ one of the principal features of his character was displayed as conspicuously as I believe it ever was at any later period. This was the remarkable ascendancy he never failed to exhibit among his young companions, and which appeared to arise from their involuntary and unconscious submission to the same firmness of understanding, and gentle exercise of it, which produced the same effects throughout his after life. Where there was always a good deal of drinking, there was of course now and then a good deal of

¹ The meetings of a club of young fellows, while he was a law-student in Edinburgh, 1788.

quarrelling. But three words from Walter Scott never failed to put all such propensities to quietness.
—JAMES BALLANTYNE (quoted by Lockhart).

He is tall and well formed, excepting one of his ankles and foot (I think the right) which is crippled, and makes him walk very lamely. He is neither fat nor thin. His face is perfectly Scotch, and though some people think it heavy, it struck me as a very agreeable one. He never could have been handsome. His forehead is very high, his nose short, his upper lip long, and the lower part of his face rather fleshy. His complexion is fresh and clear, his eyes very blue, shrewd, and penetrating. I should say the predominant expression of his face is that of strong sense. His hair, which has always been very light (as well as his eyebrows and eyelashes) is now of a silvery whiteness, which makes him look somewhat older than he really is (1820).—C. R. LESLIE ("Autobiographical Recollections").¹

*Personal
appearance*

He is a tall man, of large but not well-filled frame. His shoulders are remarkably sloping, giving an appearance of great longitude to his neck. . . . When he walks, one knee bends under him and turns inward, making his progress very slow, and painful to the spectator. His head bald upon the crown, . . . is certainly the highest above the ears I have ever seen. . . . In court, he ordinarily appears as if asleep, or retired so far within

¹ Leslie (Charles Robert). *Autobiographical Recollections*. Edited by Tom Taylor. 2 vols., 12mo. London, 1860.

*Personal
appearance.*

himself that no thought or motion disturbs the placidity of the exterior surface. . . . On one occasion, his eye was turned on one of the spectators, and his countenance involuntarily became so quizzically humorous, that I really could not help laughing.—E. D. GRIFFIN ("Remains").¹

In the course of conversation, he happened to quote a few lines from one of the old Border Ballads, and looking round, I was quite astonished with the change which seemed to have passed over every feature in his countenance. His eyes seemed no longer to glance quick and gray from beneath his impending brows, but were fixed in his expanded eyelids with a sober, solemn lustre. His mouth (the muscles about which are at all times wonderfully expressive), instead of its usual language of mirth, or benevolence, or shrewdness, was filled with a sad and pensive earnestness. The whole face was tinged with a glow that showed its lines in new energy and transparency. . . . Looking back for a moment to the former expression of the same countenance, I could not choose but wonder at the facility with which one set of features could be made to speak things so different.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk," 1819).²

No one who has seen him can forget the surprising power of change which his countenance showed

¹ Griffin (Rev. Edmund Dorr). *Remains*. Compiled by Francis Griffin. 2 vols., 12mo. New York, 1831.

² Lockhart (John Gibson). *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*. 3 vols., 8vo. Edinburgh, 1819.

when awakened from a state of composure. In 1823, when I first knew him, the hair upon his forehead was quite gray, but his face, which was healthy and sanguine, and the hair about it, which had still a strong reddish tinge, contrasted rather than harmonized with the sleek, silvery locks above ; a contrast which might seem rather suited to a jovial and humorous, than to a pathetic expression. But his features were equally capable of both. The form and hue of his eyes (for the benefit of minute physiognomists it should be noted, that the pupils contained some small specks of brown) were wonderfully calculated for showing great varieties of emotion. Their mournful aspect was extremely earnest and affecting ; and, when he told some dismal and mysterious story, they had a doubtful, melancholy, exploring look, which appealed irresistibly to the hearer's imagination. Occasionally, when he spoke of something very audacious or eccentric, they would dilate and light up with a tragi-comic, hairbrained expression, quite peculiar to himself ; one might see in it a whole chapter of *Cœur-de-lion* and the Clerk of Copmanhurst.—J. L. ADOLPHUS (quoted by Lockhart).

*Personal
appearance*

Old age—a premature old age it may be called—was, at this time (1828) advancing rapidly upon him. Although his frame was herculean, and his aspect rugged, he was evidently weak. . . . His hair was long, thin, and as white as snow,—the effect, I was told, of illness at some former period, and not of old age. . . . His complexion was dark,—not swarthy, but sunburnt ; indeed, I should suppose

*Personal
appearance.*

that it must have been originally fair, though somewhat florid ; his features were large and prominent ; . . . The most remarkable peculiarity of his face . . . was the inordinate length of the upper lip, between the mouth and nose ; of his head, its extreme depth from sinciput to occiput, which I should think was more than nine inches and a half. I am wrong, however, in saying that this was the *most* remarkable peculiarity of his head. Striking as it was, perhaps the eye would be more certainly and quickly caught by the height of the cranium ; the immense pile of forehead towering above the eyes and rising to a conical elevation which I have never seen equalled, either in bust or living head. The predominant expression of his face was shrewdness. Meeting him in the street with his hat on, you would have been struck, certainly, by his physiognomy ; but the impression it would make on you would be only that of strong, good sense, without a particle of ideality. . . . But, with the hat off, it was a different man that stood before you ; you could not look upon that mass of admirably-proportioned head—so enormously developed in its anterior portions—without being convinced that the intellect working within it was a mighty one.

When he began to talk,—which he did in a rather low tone, and with rapid utterance,—his face, usually heavy, became more animated, and an expression of grave humor—humor which seemed to be mingled largely with enjoyment of itself—lurked around the corners of his mouth, and sometimes, though not frequently, sparkled for a moment in his eyes. —JOHN INMAN (*New York Mirror*, July 11, 1835).

In a little while the "lord of the castle" himself made his appearance. I knew him at once by the descriptions I had read and heard, and the likenesses that had been published of him. He was tall, and of a large and powerful frame. His dress was simple, and almost rustic. An old green shooting coat, with a dog-whistle at the button-hole, brown linen pantaloons, stout shoes that tied at the ankles, and a white hat that had evidently seen service. He came limping up the gravel walk, aiding himself by a stout walking staff, but moving rapidly and with vigor. By his side jogged along a large iron-gray stag-hound of a most grave demeanor.—WASHINGTON IRVING ("Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey").¹

*At Abbots-
ford in 1816.*

It was not long before we heard the eager tread of a stamping heel resounding through the corridor, and in another second the door was flung open, and in limped Scott himself. Although eight and forty years have passed away since that memorable morning, the great man's person is as palpably present to me as it then was when in the flesh. His light blue, waggish eye, sheltered, almost screened, by its over-hanging penthouse of straw-colored, bushy brows, his scant, sandy-colored hair, the Shakespearian length of his upper lip, his towering Pisgah of a forehead, which gave elevation and dignity to a physiognomy otherwise deficient in both, his abrupt movements, the mingled humor, urbanity, and be-

*A greeting
at Abbots-
ford.*

¹ Irving (Washington). Crayon Miscellany. 3 vols., 12mo. Philadelphia, 1835.

*A greeting
at Abbots-
ford.*

nevolence of his smile, all recur to me with startling reality. He was dressed in a green cut-away coat, with brass buttons, drab vest, trowsers, and gaiters, with thick shoes on his feet, and a sturdy staff in his hand. He looked like a yeoman of the better class ; but his manners bespoke the ease, self-possession, and courtesy of a high-bred gentleman. Nothing could exceed the winning cordiality of his welcome. (1821.)—J. C. YOUNG ("Memoir of C. M. Young").¹

*A glimpse
on the road.*

His travelling costume . . . consisted of a green cut-away coat, or rather jacket, with short skirts and brass buttons ; drab trousers, vest, and gaiters ; a single seal and watch-key, attached to a watered black ribbon, dangling from his fob ; a loose, and not very stiff, linen collar ; a black silk neck-kerchief ; and a low-crowned, deep-brimmed hat. He had no gloves ; and his ungloved hands, large and almost clumsy, were thickly covered with red bristles. His feet were scarcely so large as one would have expected, his height being six feet. He was muscular, but not stout ; and the breadth across his chest was very great. He walked very lame, using a stout staff, with a crooked handle, even in the room ; but he was active and rapid in his movements. As he stood,—just as MacIse drew him in the Fraserian sketch,—only the toes and ball of his right foot touched the ground. It appeared

¹ Young (Rev. Julian Charles). A Memoir of Charles M. Young, Tragedian, with Extracts from his Son's Journal. 12mo. London and New York, 1871.

as if the posterior tendons had shrunk ; at any rate, his heel was raised when he stood.—R. SHELTON MACKENZIE ("Life of Scott").¹

Of the many portraits of him Chantrey's bust is, to my mind, the most perfect. Lawrence gave him a pomposity of manner which he never assumed ; but in Chantrey's bust, the gentle turn of the head, inclined a little forwards and down, and the lurking humor in the eye and about the mouth are Scott's own.—C. R. LESLIE ("Autobiographical Recollections").

*Chantrey's
bust.*

Sir Walter was the best formed man I ever saw, and, laying his weak limb out of the question, a perfect model of a man for gigantic strength. The muscles of his arms were prodigious. I remember of one day long ago, I think it was at some national dinner in Oman's Hotel, that at a certain time of the night, a number of the young heroes differed prodigiously in regard to their various degrees of muscular strength. A general measurement took place around the shoulders and chest, and I, as a particular judge in these matters, was fixed on as the measurer and umpire.

*Muscular
strength.*

Scott, who never threw cold water on any fun, submitted to be measured with the rest. He measured most round the chest, and to their great chagrin, I was next to him, and very little short. But when I came to examine the arms ! Sir Walter's had

¹ Mackenzie (Robert Shelton). Sir Walter Scott : The Story of his Life, 16mo. Boston, 1871.

*Muscular
strength.*

double the muscular power of mine, and very nearly so of every man's who was there. I declare, that from the elbow to the shoulder, they felt as if he had the strength of an ox.—JAMES HOGG ("Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott").¹

*Lifting the
anvil.*

I think the first hour of the morning is . . . favorable to the bodily strength. Among other feats, when I was a young man, I was able at times to lift a smith's anvil with one hand, by what is called the *horn*—that projecting piece of iron on which things are beaten to turn them round. But I could only do this before breakfast. It required my full strength, undiminished by the least exertion, and those who choose to try will find the feat no easy one.—SIR WALTER SCOTT (from his "Journal;" quoted by Lockhart).

*A practical
forester.*

He was an expert as well as powerful wielder of the axe, and competed with his ablest subalterns as to the paucity of blows by which a tree could be brought down. The wood rang ever and anon with his laughter while he shared their labors, and if he had taken, as he every now and then did, a whole day with them, they were sure to be invited home to Abbotsford to sup gaily at Tom Purdie's.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

I was not a little surprised with Mr. Scott's horsemanship—for, in spite of the lameness of one of his

¹ Hogg (James). Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott. 12mo. New York, 1834. (Originally published in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1834.)

legs, he manages his steed with the most complete mastery, and seems to be as much at home in the saddle as any of his own rough-riding Deloraines or Lochinvars. . . . We took several ditches that would have astonished nine-tenths of the Epsom racers, and he was always foremost at the leap.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk").

*Horseman-
ship.*

Whatever the banks of the Tweed . . . presented of interest, we frequently visited ; and I do verily believe there is not a single ford in the whole course of that river which we have not traversed together. He had an amazing fondness for fords, and was not a little adventurous in plunging through, whatever might be the state of the flood, and this even though there happened to be a bridge in view. If it seemed possible to scramble through, he scorned to go ten yards about, and in fact preferred the ford. . . . He sometimes even attempted them on foot, though his lameness interfered considerably with his progress among the slippery stones. Upon one occasion of this sort I was assisting him through the Ettrick, and we had both got upon the same tottering stone in the middle of the stream, when some story about a kelpie occurring to him, he must needs stop and tell it with all his usual vivacity—and then, laughing heartily at his own joke, he slipped his foot, . . . and down he went headlong into the pool, pulling me after him.—JAMES SKENE (quoted by Lockhart).

*Love of
adventure.*

March 21, 1827.—Wrote till twelve, then out upon the heights, though the day was stormy, and faced

*Activity
and love of
adventure.*

the gale bravely. Tom Purdie was not with me. He would have obliged me to keep the sheltered ground. There is a touch of the old spirit in me yet, that bids me brave the tempest,—the spirit that, in spite of manifold infirmities, made me a roaring boy in my youth, a desperate climber, a bold rider, a deep drinker, and a stout player at single-stick, of all which valuable qualities there are now but slender remains.—SIR WALTER SCOTT (from his “Journal ;” quoted by Lockhart).

Lockhart gives us many instances of Scott's activity in his boyhood and youth. Despite his lameness he was noted for his fearlessness in climbing, and for his strength and hardihood in fighting. A frolic or a fight always found him ready, and he seemed equally well prepared for either.

*Field-
sports.*

“Are you a sportsman?” he asked me to-day. I said I was not—that I had begun too late in life, and that I did not find shooting in particular at all amusing. “Well, neither do I,” he observed; “time has been when I did shoot a good deal, but somehow I never very much liked it. I was never quite at ease when I had knocked down my black-cock, and going to pick him up, he cast back his dying eye with a look of reproach. I don't affect to be more squeamish than my neighbors,—but I am not ashamed to say, that no practice ever reconciled me fully to the cruelty of the affair.”—BASIL HALL (quoted by Lockhart).

He was no great favorer of sects, and seldom or

never went to church. He was a complete and finished aristocrat, and the prosperity of the state was his great concern: which prosperity he deemed lost unless both example and precept flowed by regular gradation from the highest to the lowest. . . .

He had a settled impression on his mind that a revolution was impending over this country, even worse than we have experienced, and he was always keeping a sharp look-out on the progress of enthusiasm in religion, as a dangerous neighbor. There was one day, that he and Laidlaw were walking in the garden at Abbotsford, during the time that the western portion of the mansion-house was building. The architect's name, I think, was Mr. Paterson.

"Well, do you know, Laidlaw," said Scott, "that I think Paterson one of the best-natured, shrewd, sensible fellows, that I ever met with. I am quite delighted with him, for he is a fund of continual amusement to me. If you heard but how I torment him! I attack him every day on the fundamental principles of his own art. I take a position which I know to be false, and persist in maintaining it, and it is truly amazing with what good sense and good nature he supports his principles. I really like Paterson exceedingly."

"O, he's a verra fine fellow," said Laidlaw. "An extraordinar fine fellow, an' a great deal o' comings an' gangings in him. But dinna ye think, Mr. Scott, that it's a great pity he should hae been a preacher?"

"A preacher?" said Scott, staring at him, "Good Lord! What do you mean?"

"Aha! It's a' ye ken about it!" said Laidlaw.

*An illustration
of his
toryism.*

*No
sympathy
for lay
preaching.*

*No
sympathy
for lay
preaching.*

"I assure you, he's a preacher, an' a capital preacher, too. He's reckoned the best Baptist preacher in a' Galashiels, an' preaches every Sunday to a great community o' low kind o' folks."

On hearing this, Sir Walter (then Mr. Scott) wheeled about and helted off with a swiftness Laidlaw had never seen him exercise before ; exclaiming vehemently to himself, "Preaches! D—— him!" From that time forth, his delightful colloquies with Mr. Paterson ceased.—JAMES HOGG ("Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott").

*Respect for
feudal
rights.*

Although he, of course, acknowledged Buccleuch as the head and chief of the whole clan of Scott, yet he always acknowledged Harden as his immediate chieftain, and head of that powerful and numerous sept of the name, and Sir Walter was wont often to relate, how he, and his father before him, always kept their Christmas with Harden in acknowledgment of their vassalage. This he used to tell with a degree of exultation, which I always thought must have been astounding to every one who heard it ; as if his illustrious name did not throw a blaze of glory on the house of Harden a hundred times more than that race of old border barbarians, however brave, could throw over him.—JAMES HOGG ("Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott").

*The domi-
nant
passion.*

The Scotland of his affections had the clan Scott for her kernel. . . . Fancy rebuilt and most prodigally embellished the whole system of the social existence of the middle ages, in which the clansman (wherever there were clans) acknowledged practi-

cally no sovereign but his chief. The author of "The Lay" would rather have seen his heir carry the Banner of Bellenden gallantly at a foot-ball match on Carterhaugh, than he would have heard that the boy had attained the highest honors of the first university in Europe. His original pride was to be an acknowledged member of one of the "honorable families," whose progenitors had been celebrated . . . for following this banner in blind obedience to the patriarchal leader; his first and last worldly ambition was to be himself the founder of a distant branch; he desired to plant a lasting root, and dreamt not of personal fame, but of long distant generations rejoicing in the name of "Scott of Abbotsford." By this idea all his reveries—all his aspirations—all his plans and efforts, were overshadowed and controlled.

The great object and end only rose into clearer daylight, and swelled into more substantial dimensions, as public applause strengthened his confidence in his own powers and faculties; and when he had reached the summit of universal and unrivalled honor, he clung to his first love with the faith of a Paladin. It is easy enough to smile at all this; many will not understand it, and some who do may pity it. But it was at least a different thing from the modern vulgar ambition of amassing a fortune and investing it in land. The lordliest vision of acres would have had little charm for him, unless they were situated on Ettrick or Yarrow, or in

*The dominant
passion.*

— "pleasant Teviotdale,
Fast by the river Tweed—"

somewhere within the primeval territory of "the Rough Clan."—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*Scottish
dialect.*

Few persons who heard him speak could have doubted Scott's nationality; it could not have been said with justice that Scott

"Hung

On the soft phrase of Southern tongue."

His accent, on the contrary, was so broad that Mr. Harness said he sometimes could not understand him without difficulty. One day when they had been talking of "Lucia di Lammermoor," which had lately appeared, he changed the subject by observing, "Weel! I think we've a'most had enow of that chiel."—A. G. L'ESTRANGE ("Life of William Harness").¹

*Conversa-
tion.*

His pronunciation of words, considered separately, was seldom much different from that of a well-educated Englishman of his time; but he used many words in a sense which belonged to Scotland, not to England, and the tone and accent remained broadly Scotch, though, unless in the *burr*, which no doubt smacked of the country bordering on Northumberland, there was no *provincial* peculiarity about his utterance.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

The conversation of Scott was frank, hearty, picturesque, and dramatic. During the time of my

¹ L'Estrange (Rev. A. G.). The Literary Life of the Rev. William Harness. London, 1870.

visit he inclined to the comic rather than the grave, in his anecdotes and stories, and such I was told was his general inclination. He relished a joke, or a trait of humor in social intercourse, and laughed with right good will. He talked not for effect or display, but from the flow of his spirits, the stores of his memory, and the vigor of his imagination. He had a natural turn for narration, and his narratives and descriptions were without effort, yet wonderfully graphic. He placed the same before you like a picture ; he gave the dialogue with the appropriate dialect or peculiarities, and described the appearance and characters of his personages with that spirit and felicity evinced in his writings.—WASHINGTON IRVING ("Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey").

He was as good a listener as talker, appreciated everything that others said, however humble might be their rank or pretensions, and was quick to testify his perception of any point in their discourse. He arrogated nothing to himself, but was perfectly unassuming and unpretending, entering with heart and soul into the business or pleasure, or, I had almost said folly, of the hour and the company. No one's concerns, no one's thoughts, no one's opinions, no one's tastes and pleasures seemed beneath him. He made himself so thoroughly the companion of those with whom he happened to be, that they forgot for a time his vast superiority, and only recollected and wondered, when all was over, that it was Scott with whom they had been on such familiar terms, and in whose society they had felt so

perfectly at their ease.—WASHINGTON IRVING ("Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey").

*Conversa-
tion.*

People used to be divided . . . as to the superiority of Scott's poetry or his talk. His novels had not yet begun to suggest another alternative. Scarcely, however, even in his novels was he more striking or delightful than in society; where the halting limb, the burr in the throat, the heavy cheeks, the high Goldsmith-forehead, the unkempt locks, and the general plainness of appearance, with the Scotch accent and stories and sayings, all graced by gayety, simplicity, and kindness, made a combination most worthy of being enjoyed.—LORD COCKBURN ("Memorials of his Time").¹

His humor in conversation, as in his works, was genial and free from all causticity. . . . He played with the foibles and errors of his fellow-beings, and presented them in a thousand whimsical and characteristic lights, but the kindness and generosity of his nature would not allow him to be a satirist. I do not recollect a sneer throughout his conversation.—WASHINGTON IRVING ("Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey").

Sir Walter's conversation was always amusing, always interesting. There was a conciseness, a candor, and judiciousness in it which never was equalled. His anecdotes were without end, and I am almost

¹ Cockburn (Henry Thomas, Lord). *Memorials of his Time*. 8vo. Edinburgh, 1856.

certain they were all made off-hand, for I never heard one of them either before or after. His were no Joe Miller's jokes.—JAMES HOGG ("Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott").

*Conversa-
tion.*

The great charm of his conversation, being a man of such eminence, was its perfect simplicity, and the entire absence of vanity and love of display.—SIR A. ALISON ("Autobiography").¹

It would, I think, be extremely difficult to give a just idea of his general conversation to any one who had not known him. Considering his great personal and literary popularity, and the wide circle of society in which he had lived, it is perhaps remarkable that so few of his sayings, real or imputed, are in circulation. But he did not affect sayings; the points and sententious turns, which are so easily caught up and transmitted, were not natural to him: though he occasionally expressed a thought very pithily and neatly. For example, he once described the Duke of Wellington's style of debating as "slicing the argument into two or three parts, and helping himself to the best." But the great charm of his "table-talk" was in the sweetness and *abandon* with which it flowed,—always, however, guided by good sense and taste; the warm and unstudied eloquence with which he expressed rather sentiments than opinions; and the liveliness and force with which he narrated and described; and all that

¹ Alison (Sir Archibald). Some Account of my Life and Writings. An Autobiography. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1883.

*Conversa-
tion.*

he spoke derived so much of its effect from indefinable felicities of manner, look, and tone—and sometimes from the choice of apparently insignificant words—that a moderately faithful transcript of his sentences would be but a faint image of his conversation.—J. L. ADOLPHUS (quoted by Lockhart).

He amplified, digressed, and in relating anything he had heard, added touches of his own that were always charming. Lord Eldin (John Clerk), once said to him—"Why, Sir Walter, that's a story of mine you've been telling; but you have so decorated it, that I scarcely knew it again."

"Do you think," said Scott, "I'd tell one of your stories, or of anybody's, and not put a laced coat and a cocked hat upon it?"—C. R. LESLIE ("Autobiographical Recollections").

*Auto-
biograph-
ical recol-
lections.*

At Abbotsford, Sir Walter was as charming as a man could be; but the charm consisted not in new ideas or felicitous expressions struck out extempore during discussion, but in the prodigious fund of anecdote, story, and adventure, relating to times past, which he had acquired by reading or observation.

. . . The whole stores of his mind . . . were poured out in company, with great power of narrative, and with infinite humor and effect. But the greater part of the charm which captivated all who approached him lay in the manner of telling; his anecdotes seldom told when repeated second-hand; and though his observations showed great practical acquaintance with the world, and infinite humor in the observation of it, yet they seldom indicated any

remarkable reach of thought, or deep reflection upon the course of human affairs.'—SIR A. ALISON ("Autobiography").

No one who knew Sir Walter, will fail to remember his admirable convivial powers, or the quaint good humor, utterly *sans pretention*, by which these were animated. No sooner had he taken his place at table than by some *naïf* remark, not addressed to any one in particular, he usually effected the utter demolition of "starch," and, without having once in all his life ever *aimed* at saying a "good thing," produced more mirth and joviality than any professional wit or punster ever could. He was so decidedly an enemy to "starch," or pretension of any kind, that it became invariably decomposed in his presence, and he cared not of what platitudes or "merry-andradas" he served himself to effect that purpose. Only once, and at his own table, he felt surprised and overthrown. Telling *more suo*, or wishing to tell, some brief anecdote from his own stores of recollection, he happened, about mid-way, to interpose the words; "Now whether it occurred from my own stupidity, or because"—the break was fatal, and the anecdote to this hour remains untold, for in rushed most unexpectedly a regular man of starch, a *soi-disant* poet. . . . "Oh, Sir Walter!" solemnly exclaimed this worthy, "don't say that! No one can admit for a moment the plea of *your* stupidity." This was too much. The mighty minstrel changed countenance, drooping his under jaw in a

*Convivial
traits.*

¹ See p. 68.

*Convivial
traits.*

manner that would have done honor to Grimaldi ; but instantly he sought refuge and protection against his literary guest from an honest Leith wine-merchant, who never in his life had perused one page of poetry, earnestly craving from this worthy an opinion as to the merits of a bottle of rare old Madeira, whereupon the critic, applying a Bardolphian nose to the *bouquet*, pronounced favorably, and with great *gusto*. It was easy then to begin another yarn, and the man of starch was left alone in his glory.—R. P. GILLIES ("Memoirs of a Literary Veteran").¹

*Dramatic
talent.*

Not only was he inexhaustible in anecdote, but he . . . loved to exert the talent of dramatizing, and in some measure representing in his own person the incidents he told of, or the situations he imagined. I recollect . . . his sketching in this manner . . . a sailor trying to persuade a monkey to speak, and vowing, with all kinds of whimsical oaths, that he would not tell of him. . . . Another specimen of his talent for representation which struck me forcibly . . . was his telling the story . . . of a dying man who, in a state of delirium, while his nurse was absent, left his room, appeared at a club of which he was president, and was taken for his own ghost. In relating this not very likely story, he described with his deep and lingering tones, and with gestures and looks suited to each part of the action, the sick man, deadly pale, and with vacant eyes, walking into the club-room ; the silence and

¹ Gillies (Robert Pearce). *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran*. 3 vols., 12mo. London, 1854.

consternation of the club; the supposed spectre moving to the head of the table; giving a ghastly salutation to the company; raising a glass toward his lips; stiffly turning his head from side to side, as if pledging the several members; his departure, just at midnight; and the breathless conference of the club, as they recovered themselves from this strange visit.—J. L. ADOLPHUS (quoted by Lockhart).

*Dramatic
talent.*

He had strong powers of mimicry—could talk with a peasant quite in his own style, and frequently in general society introduced rustic *patois*, northern, southern, or midland, with great truth and effect; but these things were inlaid dramatically, or playfully, upon his narrative. His exquisite taste in this matter was not less remarkable in his conversation than in the prose of his Scotch novels.—J. G. LOCKHART (“Life of Scott”).

Mimicry.

He read aloud high poetry with far greater simplicity, depth, and effect, than any other man I ever heard; and, in *Macbeth* or *Julius Cæsar*, or the like, I doubt if John Kemble could have been more impressive.—J. G. LOCKHART (“Life of Scott”).

*Reading
aloud.*

Never, perhaps, did a man go through all the gradations of laughter with such complete enjoyment, and a countenance so radiant. The first dawn of a humorous thought would show itself sometimes, as he sat silent, by an involuntary lengthening of the upper lip, followed by a shy sidelong glance at his neighbors, indescribably whimsical, and seeming

Laughter.

Laughter.

to ask from their looks whether the spark of drolery should be suppressed, or allowed to blaze out. In the full tide of mirth he did indeed "laugh the heart's laugh," like Walpole, but it was not boisterous and overpowering, nor did it check the course of his words; he could go on telling or descanting, while his lungs did "crow like chanticleer," his syllables, in the struggle, growing more emphatic, his accent more strongly Scotch, and his voice plaintive with excess of merriment.—J. L. ADOLPHUS (quoted by Lockhart).

*A good
laughworth
standing
for.*

I remember him about that time (1821): he used to walk up and down Princes Street, as we boys were coming from the High School, generally with some friend, and every now and then he stopped, and resting his lame leg against his stick, laughed right out at some joke of his friend's or his own: he said a good laugh was worth standing for, and besides required it for its completion. How we rejoiced when we took off our bonnets, to get a smile and a nod from him, thinking him as great as Julius Cæsar or Philopœmen, Hector or Agricola, any day.—DR. JOHN BROWN ("Horæ Subsecivæ").¹

*Conduct under
fire.*

Lady Hume asked her² to play Rob Roy, an old ballad. A good many persons were present, and she felt a little embarrassed by the recollection of how much her father's name had been mentioned

¹ Brown (Dr. John). *Horæ Subsecivæ*. Third Series. 12mo. Edinburgh, 1882.

² Sir Walter Scott's daughter.

in connection with this strange Highlander's ; but, as upon all occasions, she took the most direct means to settle her difficulties ; . . . she ran across the room to her father, and, blushing pretty deeply, whispered to him. "Yes, my dear," he said, loud enough to be heard, "play it, to be sure, if you are asked, and Waverley and the Antiquary, too, if there be any such ballads."¹—GEORGE TICKNOR ("Life, Letters, and Journals").²

Conduct under fire.

The conversation turned on the *vraisemblance* of certain dramatis personæ in a modern book. Sir Walter's opinion was asked. "Well!" replied he, "they are as true as the personages in 'Waverley' and 'Guy Mannering' are, I think." This was long before he had confessed that he was the author of the Scotch Novels, and when much curiosity was alive on the subject. I looked very steadily into his face as he spoke, but it did not betray any consciousness or suppressed humor. His command of countenance was perfect.—B. W. PROCTER ("Recollections of Men of Letters").³

Diverting suspicion.

¹ This was in 1819, when the authorship of the novels had not yet been acknowledged by Scott ; it was not until 1827 that he publicly made this acknowledgment ; but as early as 1815 the truth must have been pretty generally conjectured. Lord Campbell, in a letter of 1815, says, "All those who have good means of information believe they are written by Walter Scott, although he strenuously disclaims them."

² Ticknor (George). *Life, Letters, and Journals*. 2 vols., 8vo. Boston : Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1876.

³ Procter (Bryan W.). *Autobiographical Fragment and Biographical Notes, with Sketches of Contemporaries*. Edited by C. [oventry] P. [atmore]. 12mo. London, 1877.

Almost betrays his authorship of the novels.

Mr. John Sinclair in his volume of "Sketches,"¹ gives the following anecdote as told by Mr. Guthrie Wright, an old friend of Scott's:—"I called one day at the Edinburgh post-office, and began to read in the lobby a letter from Lady Abercorn, in which she gave an answer to some arguments I had stated to her in proof that Sir Walter was the author of 'Waverley;' while thus employed, I stumbled on Sir Walter himself. He immediately inquired about whom I was reading so busily. 'About *you*,' I replied, and put the letter into his hand. I soon observed him blush as red as scarlet, and recollected that Lady Abercorn in her letter had said, 'I am quite sure you are wrong, for Sir Walter Scott declared to me *upon his honor*, that he was not the author of 'Waverley.' On reading this, Sir Walter exclaimed; 'I'm sure I never said so. *I never pledged my honor*: she is quite mistaken.' Then perceiving that he had thus betrayed himself, he stammered out some unintelligible sentence, and then continued: 'Well, Mr. Wright, it is a very curious question, who can be the author of these novels. Suppose we take a walk round the Calton Hill, and lay our heads together to find him out.' We proceeded arm-in-arm, and I said, 'I think that we can soon so completely hedge in the author, that he cannot escape us.' 'Well, then,' said Sir Walter, 'how would you hedge him in?' I replied, 'You will agree with me that the author of "Waverley," whoever he may be, must be a *lawyer*.' 'True, it is evident he must be a law-

¹ Sinclair (John). *Sketches of Old Times and Distant Places*. 12mo. London, 1875.

yer.' 'You will also admit that he must be an *antiquary*?' 'No doubt, he must be an antiquary.' 'He must also be of *Jacobite connections*?' 'Certainly, he must have Jacobite propensities.' 'He must also have a strong turn for *poetry*?' 'Yes, he must be something of a poet.' I next assigned some reasons why he must be rather more than forty years of age, and then added, 'Now, among our friends in the Parliament House, let us consider how many there are, who, besides being *lawyers*, *poets*, *antiquaries*, and of *Jacobite connections* are rather more than *forty* years of age.' 'Well,' says Sir Walter, 'what do you think of Cranstoun?' I gave reasons for setting aside Cranstoun's pretensions, adverting particularly to his want of humor; and then Sir Walter, seeing that he himself must inevitably come next, unloosed his arm, and said, 'Mr. Wright, the author of "*Waverley*," whoever he may be, gets people to buy his books without a name; and he would be a greater fool than I think he is, were he to give a name. Good morning.'"

Almost betrays his authorship of the novels.

Murray told me that Sir Walter Scott, on being taxed by him as the author of "*Old Mortality*," not only denied having written it, but added, "In order to convince you that I am not the author, I will review the book for you in the '*Quarterly*'"—which he actually did, and Murray still has the MS. in his handwriting.—R. H. BARHAM (Extract from Diary).¹

Offers to review Old Mortality.

¹ Barham (R. H. D.). *Life and Letters of Richard Harris Barham*. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1870.

*Silent in
regard to
his works.*

With respect to his own works Sir Walter did not often talk even of those which were avowed. If he ever indulged in anything like egotism, he loved better to speak of what he had done and seen than of what he had written.—J. L. ADOLPHUS (quoted by Lockhart).

He was fond of quoting the works of his contemporaries; he was continually reciting scraps of border songs, or relating anecdotes of border story. With respect to his own poems, and their merits, however, he was mute, and while with him I preserved a scrupulous silence on the subject.—WASHINGTON IRVING ("Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey").

*Life at
Abbotsford.*

By the time we had reached home, after our delightful ride, the gong was sounding for dressing. On descending to the drawing-room, we found several friends and neighbors of Scott's assembled there. . . . The dinner, in point of profusion was exactly what I might have expected from the foretaste I had at luncheon and breakfast. The characteristic feature of the meal was its absence of all stiffness and restraint—indeed, its joyous hilarity; and yet the laws of *bienséance* were never violated. There was, however, one material drawback to my entire enjoyment of my dinner, in the droning notes of the bagpipe, which never intermitted until the cloth was about to be removed. . . . Walter Scott was a Scotchman, and loved to keep up feudal habits. . . . It was an established *usage de maison* that John of Skye, a grand fellow, in

full Highland costume—a lineal descendant of Wallace, by-the-bye—should, during the hour of dinner, parade up and down in front of the windows, and squeak and squeal away, until summoned to receive his reward. When the cheese had been removed, and the cloth brushed, a footman stood at the *right* of “the sheriff” (as his retainers loved to call him), and the piper at his *left*, still bonnetted. The footman poured out a bumper of Glenlivet and handed it to his master; he, in turn, passed it on to John of Skye. There was a smack of the lips, a stately bow to the company, and the Highlander was gone.

After the gentlemen were supposed to have had their quantum of wine, they withdrew to the armoury for coffee, where the ladies joined them. In the centre of a small, dimly lighted chamber, the walls of which were covered with morions, and claymores, and pistols, and carbines, and cuirasses, and antique shields and halberds, &c. &c., each piece containing a history in itself, sat the generous host himself in a high-backed chair. He would lead the conversation to the mystic and the supernatural, and tell us harrowing tales of glamour, and second-sight, and necromancy; and when he thought he had filled the scene enough, and sufficiently chilled our marrows, he would call on Adam Fergusson for one of his Jacobite relics—such as *Hey, Johnny Cope, are ye wauking yet?* or *The Laird o’ Cockpen*, or *Wha wad na fecht for Charlie?*—and these he sang with such point and zest, and such an under-current of implication, that you felt sure in what direction his own sympathies would have flowed had he been out in the ’45. When he had abdicated the chair, my

*Life at
Abbotsford.*

*Life at
Abbotsford.*

father was called upon to occupy it, and he gave us, from memory, the whole of *Tam o' Shanter*. It seemed to be an invariable custom at Abbotsford, that every one admitted within its circle should utilize the gift within him, so as to contribute to the common stock of social amusement. (1821).—J. C. YOUNG ("Memoir of C. M. Young").

*His work-
room.*

He at this time (1818) occupied as his den a square small room, behind the dining parlor in Castle Street. It had but a single Venetian window, opening on a patch of turf not much larger than itself, and the aspect of the place was on the whole sombrous. The walls were entirely clothed with books; most of them folios and quartos, and all in that complete state of repair which at a glance reveals a tinge of bibliomania. A dozen volumes or so, needful for immediate purposes of reference, were placed close by him on a small movable frame. . . . All the rest were in their proper niches, and wherever a volume had been lent, its room was occupied by a wooden block of the same size, having a card with the name of the borrower and date of the loan, tacked on its front. . . . Every case and shelf was accurately lettered, and the works arranged systematically. . . . The only table was a massive piece of furniture which he had had constructed on the model of one at Rokeby; with a desk and all its appurtenances on either side, that an amanuensis might work opposite to him when he chose; and with small tiers of drawers, reaching all round to the floor. . . . His own writing apparatus was a very handsome

old box, richly carved, lined with crimson velvet, and containing ink-bottles, taper-stand, &c., in silver—the whole in such order that it might have come from the silversmith's window half an hour before. Besides his own huge elbow chair, there were but two others in the room. . . . The room had no space for pictures except one, an original portrait of Claverhouse, which hung over the chimney-piece, with a Highland target on either side, and broadswords and dirks . . . disposed star-fashion round them. A few green tin-boxes, such as solicitors keep title-deeds in, were piled over each other on one side of the window ; and on the top of these lay a fox's tail, mounted on an antique silver handle, wherewith, as often as he had occasion to take down a book, he gently brushed the dust off the upper leaves before opening it.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*His work-
room.*

His study, as I recollect it, was strictly a work-room, though an elegant one. It had been fancifully decked out in pictures, but it had, I think, very few articles of mere ornament. The chief of these was the print of Stothard's Canterbury Pilgrims, which hung over the chimney-piece, and, from the place assigned to it, must have been in great favor. . . . The shelves were stored with serviceable books ; one door opened into the great library, and a hanging stair within the room itself communicated with his bedroom.—J. L. ADOLPHUS (quoted by Lockhart).

*Study at
Abbotsford.*

Perhaps the most touching evidence of the last-

*Family
relics.*

ing tenderness of his early domestic feeling was exhibited to his executors, when they opened his repositories. . . . On lifting up his desk, we found arranged in careful order a series of little objects, which had obviously been so placed there that his eye might rest on them every morning before he began his tasks. There were the old-fashioned boxes that had garnished his mother's toilette, . . . the silver taper-stand which the young advocate had bought for her with his first five-guinea fee— . . . his father's snuff-box and étui-case—and more things of the like sort, recalling "The old familiar faces."

The same feeling was apparent in all the arrangements of his private apartment. Pictures of his father and mother were the only ones in his dressing-room. . . . Even his father's rickety washing-stand, with all its cramped appurtenances, though exceedingly unlike what a man of his very scrupulous habits would have selected in these days, kept its ground. The whole place seemed fitted up like a little chapel of the lares.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*Course of
life in the
country.*

He had now (1805) adopted the habits in which, with very slender variation, he ever after persevered when in the country. He rose by five o'clock, lit his own fire when the season required one, and shaved and dressed with great deliberation—for he was a very martinet as to all but the mere coxcomberies of the toilet, not abhorring effeminate dandyism itself so cordially as the slightest approach to personal slovenliness, or even those "bed-gown and

slipper tricks," as he called them, in which literary men are so apt to indulge. Arrayed in his shooting-jacket, or whatever dress he meant to use till dinner-time, he was seated at his desk by six o'clock, all his papers arranged before him in the most accurate order, and his books of reference marshalled around him on the floor, while at least one favorite dog lay watching his eye. . . . Thus, by the time the family assembled for breakfast between nine and ten, he had done enough (in his own language) "*to break the neck of the day's work.*" After breakfast a couple of hours more were given to his solitary tasks, and by noon he was, as he used to say, "his own man." When the weather was bad, he would labor incessantly all the morning; but the general rule was to be out and on horseback by one o'clock at the latest; while, if any more distant excursion had been proposed over night, he was ready to start on it by ten; his occasional rainy days of unintermitted study forming, as he said, a fund in his favor, out of which he was entitled to draw for accommodation whenever the sun shone with special brightness.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*Course of
life in the
country.*

In September, 1828, Richardson and I visited Scott for a few days at Abbotsford, and had the rare good fortune to find him nearly alone; and nothing could be more delightful. . . . His habits at this time were these. He rose about six; wrote from about half-past six till nine; . . . breakfasted and lounged from nine to eleven; wrote from eleven till about two; walked till about four;

*A day at
Abbotsford.*

*A day at
Abbotsford.*

dined at five, partaking freely, but far from immoderately, of various wines; and then, as soon as the ladies withdrew, taking to cigars and hot whisky-toddy; went to the drawing-room soon, where he inspired everybody with his passion for Scotch music, and, if anxiously asked, never refused to recite any old ballad, or tell any old tale. The house was asleep by eleven. When fitted up for dinner, he was like any other comfortably ill-dressed gentleman. But in the morning, with the large, coarse jacket, great stick, and leathern cap, he was Dandy Dinmont, or Dirk Hatteraick—a smuggler or a poacher.—LORD COCKBURN ("Memorials of his Time").

*Working
against
heavy odds.*

I never can forget the description Sir Adam Fergusson gave me of a morning he had passed with Scott at Abbotsford, which at that time was still unfinished, and, swarming with carpenters, painters, masons, and bricklayers, was surrounded with all the dirt and disorderly discomfort inseparable from the process of house-building. The room they sat in was in the roughest condition which admitted of their occupying it at all; the raw, new chimney smoked intolerably. Out-of-doors the whole place was one chaos of bricks, mortar, scaffolding, tiles, and slates. A heavy mist shrouded the whole landscape of lovely Tweed side, and distilled in a cold, persistent, and dumb drizzle. Maida, the well-beloved stag-hound, kept fidgetting in and out of the room, Walter Scott every five minutes exclaiming, "Eh, Adam! the puir beast's just wearying to get out;" or, "Eh, Adam! the puir creature's just crying to come in;" when Sir Adam would open the

door to the raw, chilly air for the wet, muddy hound's exit or entrance, while Scott, with his face swollen with a grievous toothache, and one hand pressed hard to his cheek, with the other was writing the inimitably humorous opening chapters of "The Antiquary," which he passed across the table, sheet by sheet, to his friend, saying, "Now, Adam, d'ye think that will do?" Such a picture of mental triumph over outward circumstances has surely seldom been surpassed: house-builders, smoky chimney, damp draughts, restless, dripping dog, and toothache form what our friend, Miss Masson, called a "concatenation of exteriorities" little favorable to literary composition of any sort; but considered as accompaniments or inspiration of that delightfully comical beginning of "The Antiquary," they are all but incredible.—FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE ("Records of a Girlhood").¹

*How the
Antiquary
was begun.*

He now (1819), for the first time in his life, found it necessary to employ the hand of another. . . . His amanuenses were William Laidlaw and John Ballantyne. . . . I have often heard both these secretaries describe the astonishment with which they were equally affected when Scott began this experiment. The affectionate Laidlaw beseeching him to stop dictating, when his audible suffering filled every pause. "Nay, Willie," he answered, "only see that the doors are fast. I would fain keep all the cry as well as all the wool to ourselves; but as to giving

*Working in
spite of
pain.*

¹ Kemble (Frances Anne). Records of a Girlhood. 12mo. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1879.

*Working in
spite of
pain.*

over work, that can only be when I am in wool-len." John Ballantyne told me that after the first day he always took care to have a dozen of pens made before he seated himself opposite to the sofa on which Scott lay, and that though he often turned himself upon the pillow with a groan of torment, he usually continued the sentence in the same breath. But when dialogue of peculiar animation was in progress, spirit seemed to triumph altogether over matter—he arose from his couch and walked up and down the room, raising and lowering his voice, and as it were acting the parts. It was in this fashion that Scott produced the far greater portion of the *Bride of Lammermoor*—the whole of the *Legend of Montrose*—and almost the whole of *Ivanhoe*. Yet, when his health was fairly re-established, he disdained to avail himself of the power of dictation, which he had thus put to the sharpest test, but resumed, and for many years resolutely adhered to, the old plan of writing every thing with his own hand. When I once, some time afterwards, expressed my surprise that he did not consult his ease, and spare his eyesight at all events, by occasionally dictating, he answered, "I should as soon think of getting into a sedan chair while I can use my legs." —J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*Rapid
work.*

November 20th, 1829.—Moore talked of Scott and his wonderful labor and power of composition, as well as the extent to which he has carried the art of book-making; besides writing this history of Scotland for Dr. Lardner's "*Encyclopædia*," he is working at the prefaces for the republication of the

"Waverley Novels," the "Tales of a Grandfather," and he has still found time to review Tytler, which he has done out of the scraps and chips of his other works. A little while ago he had to correct some of the proofs of the history of Scotland, and being dissatisfied with what was done, he nearly wrote it over again, and sent it up to the editor. Some time after, finding another copy of the proofs, he forgot that he had corrected them before, and he rewrote these also, and sent them up, and the editor is at this moment engaged in selecting from the two corrected copies the best parts of each.—CHARLES C. F. GREVILLE ("The Greville Memoirs").¹

*Rapid
work.*

Wherever we slept, whether in a noble mansion or in the shabbiest of country inns,² and whether the work was done after retiring at night or before an early start in the morning, he *very rarely* mounted the carriage again without having a packet of the well-known aspect ready, sealed, and corded, and addressed to his printer in Edinburgh. I used to suspect that he had adopted in his latter years the plan of writing every thing on paper of the quarto form, in place of the folio which he at an earlier period used, chiefly because in this way, whenever he was writing, and wherever he wrote, he might seem to casual observers to be merely engaged upon a common letter; . . . but when he had finished his two or three letters,

*Industry
when
travelling.*

¹ Greville (Charles C. F.). A Journal of the Reigns of King George IV. and King William IV. Edited by Henry Reeve. 3 vols., 8vo. London, 1874.

² While on a journey in Scotland.

St. Ronan's Well, or whatever was in hand, had made a chapter in advance.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*Economy
of time.*

Those who observed him the most constantly were never able to understand how he contrived to keep himself so thoroughly up to the stream of contemporary literature of almost all sorts; . . . the grand secret was his perpetual practice of his own grand maxim *never to be doing nothing*. He had no "unconsidered trifles" of time. Every moment was turned to account; and thus he had leisure for every thing—except, indeed, the newspapers, which consume so many precious hours nowadays with most men, and of which, during the period of my acquaintance with him, he certainly read less than any other man I ever knew, that had any habit of reading at all.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

One of his visitors . . . observing how his host was harassed with lion-hunters, and what a number of hours he spent daily in the company of his work people . . . expressed . . . his wonder that Scott should ever be able to write books at all while in the country. "I know," he said, "that you contrive to get a few hours in your own room, and that may do for the mere penwork; but when is it that you think?" "O," said Scott, "I lie *siuimeefing* over things for an hour or so before I get up—and there's the time I am dressing to overhaul my half-sleeping half-waking *projet de chapitre*—and when I get the paper before me, it commonly runs off pretty easily. Besides, I often take a doze

in the plantations, and while Tom marks out a dyke or a drain I have directed, one's fancy may be running its ain riggs in some other world."—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*Economy
of time.*

I observed, during the first evening I spent with him in his *sanctum*, that while he talked, his hands were hardly ever idle. Sometimes he folded letter-covers—sometimes he twisted paper into matches, performing both tasks with great mechanical expertness and nicety; and when there was no loose paper fit to be so dealt with, he snapped his fingers, and the noble Maida roused himself from his lair on the hearth-rug, and laid his head across his master's knees, to be caressed and fondled.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*Constant
activity.*

It was a rule, that every letter he received should be answered that same day. Nothing else could have enabled him to keep abreast with the flood of communications that in the sequel put his good nature to the severest test—but already (1805) the demands on him in this way also were numerous; and he included attention to them among the necessary business which must be despatched before he had a right to close his writing-box, or, as he phrased it, "to say *out damned spot*, and be a gentleman."—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*Correspond-
ence.*

Walter Scott had one accomplishment of great value in authorship. Owing to several years' copying legal documents, which are nothing if not legible, he wrote singularly well. In 1840, I was kindly

*Hand-
writing.*

*Hand-
writing.*

permitted . . . to examine . . . the original manuscripts, . . . once belonging to Archibald Constable. All of these manuscripts, up to 1814, when "Waverley" was published, show a "hand o' write" bold, clear, and round. After that, Scott seemed to have become careless ; perhaps he wrote too rapidly and too much. . . . In his later years, Scott wrote very illegibly ; running the words into each other, and sometimes only half forming them, particularly the terminations.—R. SHELTON MACKENZIE ("Life of Scott").

*Treatment
of his
children.*

He was not one of those who take much delight in a mere infant ; but no father ever devoted more time and tender care to his offspring than he did to each of his, as they successively reached the age when they could listen to him and understand his talk. Like their mute playmates, Camp and the greyhounds, they had at all times free access to his study ; he never considered their tattle as any disturbance ; they went and came as pleased their fancy ; he was always ready to answer their questions ; and when they, unconscious how he was engaged, entreated him to lay down his pen and tell them a story, he would take them on his knee, repeat a ballad or a legend, kiss them, and set them down again to their marbles or ninepins, and resume his labor as if refreshed by the interruption. . . . He partook all their little joys and sorrows, and made his kind informal instructions to blend so easily and playfully with the current of their own sayings and doings, that so far from regarding him with any distant awe, it was never thought that

any sport or diversion could go on in the right way, unless *papa* were of the party, or that the rainiest day could be dull so he were at home.—J. G. LOCKHART (“Life of Scott”).

*Treatment
of his
children.*

In his family he was kind, condescending, and attentive, but highly imperative. No one of them durst for a moment disobey his orders, and if he began to hang down his eyebrows, a single hint was enough. In every feature of his face decision was strongly marked.—JAMES HOGG (“Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott”).

*Authority
in his
family.*

I believe Scott has somewhere expressed in print his satisfaction that, among all the changes of our manners, the ancient freedom of personal intercourse may still be indulged between a master and an *out-of-door's* servant; but in truth he kept up the old fashion even with domestic servants, to an extent which I have hardly seen practised by any other gentleman. He conversed with his coachman, if he sat by him, as he often did, on the box—with his footman, if he happened to be in the rumble; and when there was any very young lad in the household, he held it a point of duty to see that his employments were so arranged as to leave time for advancing his education, made him bring his copy-book once a week to the library, and examined him as to all that he was doing. . . . With all this, Scott was a very rigid enforcer of discipline—contrived to make it thoroughly understood by all about him, that they must do their part by him as he did by them; and the result was happy. I never

*Treatment
of servants.*

knew any man so well served as he was—so carefully, so respectfully, and so silently.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*Fondness
for
animals.*

In our walks, Scott would frequently pause in conversation to notice his dogs and speak to them, as if rational companions; . . . Maida deported himself with a gravity becoming his age and size, and seemed to consider himself called upon to preserve a great degree of dignity and decorum in our society. . . . Scott amused himself with these peculiarities. "I make no doubt," said he, "when Maida is alone with these young dogs, he throws gravity aside, and plays the boy as much as any of them; but he is ashamed to do so in our company, and seems to say, 'Ha' done with your nonsense, youngsters: what will the laird and that other gentleman think of me if I give way to such foolery?'"

. . . His domestic animals were his friends; everything about him seemed to rejoice in the light of his countenance: the face of the humblest dependant brightened at his approach, as if he anticipated a cordial and cheering word.—WASHINGTON IRVING ("Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey").

*Burial of
Camp.*

Camp, the first of not a few dogs whose names will be "freshly remembered" as long as their master's works are popular . . . died about January, 1800, and was buried on a fine moonlight night, in the little garden behind the house in Castle Street, immediately opposite to the window at which Scott usually sat writing. My wife tells me she remembers the whole family standing in tears about the

grave, as her father himself smoothed down the turf above Camp with the saddest expression of face she had ever seen in him. He had been engaged to dine abroad that day, but apologized on account of "the death of a dear old friend."—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*Burial of
Camp.*

I have . . . been present at his first reception of many visitors ; and upon such occasions, as indeed upon every other, I never saw a man who, in his intercourse with all persons, was so perfect a master of courtesy. His manners were so plain and natural, and his kindness took such immediate possession of the feelings, that this excellence in him might for a time pass almost unobserved. . . . Occasionally, when he stood a little on ceremony, he threw into his address a deferential tone, which had in it something of old-fashioned politeness, and became him extremely well.—J. L. ADOLPHUS (quoted by Lockhart).

Courtesy.

A point of hospitality in which Sir Walter Scott never failed, whatever might be the pretensions of the guest, was to do the honors of conversation. When a stranger arrived, he seemed to consider it as much a duty to offer him the resources of his mind as those of his table ; taking care, however, by his choice of subjects, to give the visitor an opportunity of making his own stores, if he had them, available.—J. L. ADOLPHUS (quoted by Lockhart).

*Delicate
hospitality.*

It has been a constant source of pleasure to me to remark his deportment towards his family, his neigh-

Geniality.

bors, his domestics, his very dogs and cats ; everything that comes within his influence seems to catch a beam of the sunshine that plays round his heart. —WASHINGTON IRVING (Letter, in "Life of Irving").

Patient endurance of bores.

I have heard a spruce Senior Wrangler lecture him for half an evening on the niceties of the Greek epigram ; I have heard the poorest of all parliamentary blunderers try to detail to him the *pros* and *cons* of what he called the *Truck System* ; and in either case the same bland eye watched the lips of the tormentor. But, with such ludicrous exceptions, Scott was the one object of the Abbotsford pilgrims ; and evening followed evening only to show him exerting, for their amusement, more of animal spirits, to say nothing of intellectual vigor, than would have been considered by any other man in the company as sufficient for the whole expenditure of a week's existence.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

A docile lion.

Scott, more correctly than any man I ever knew, appreciated the value of that apparently enthusiastic *engouement* which the world of London shows to the fashionable wonder of the year. During the sojourn of 1809, the homage paid him would have turned the head of any less gifted man of eminence. . . . "All this is very very flattering," he would say, "and very civil ; and if people are amused with hearing me tell a parcel of old stories, or relate a pack of ballads to lovely young girls and gaping matrons, they are easily pleased, and a man would be very ill-natured who would not give pleasure so cheaply conferred."

If he dined with us, and found any new faces, "Well, do you want me to play lion to-day?" was his usual question. "I will roar, if you like it, to your heart's content." He would, indeed, in such cases, put forth all his inimitable powers of entertainment—and day after day surprised me by their unexpected extent and variety. Then, as the party dwindled, and we were left alone, he laughed at himself, quoted, "Yet know that I one Snug the joiner am—no lion fierce," &c.—and was at once himself again.—J. B. S. MORRITT (quoted by Lockhart).

*A docile
lion.*

On coming to a broad path in the middle of the woods, we took notice of a finger-post, on which was written "The Road to Selkirk." We made some remark about it, upon which he laughed, and said that that finger-post had gained him great popularity in the neighborhood. "I cannot say," he remarked, "that I had any such view when I ordered it to be put up. The public road, it is true, is not far off, and this leads through the very centre of my grounds, but I never could bring myself to make that a reason for excluding any person who finds it agreeable or advantageous to take over the hill if he likes. But although my practice in this respect had always been well known, the actual admission of it, the avowed establishment of it as a sort of right, . . . was received as a kind of boon. . . . Nothing on earth would induce me to put up boards threatening prosecution, or cautioning one's fellow-creatures to beware of man-traps and spring-guns. . . . I will venture to say, that not one of my young trees has ever been cut, nor a fence

*"The road
to
Selkirk"—
Contempt
for churls.*

"The road
to
Selkirk"—
Contempt
for churls.

trodden down, or any kind of damage done in consequence of the free access which all the world has to my place. Round the house, of course, there is a set of walks set apart and kept private for the ladies—but over all the rest of my land any one may rove as he likes. I please myself with the reflection that many people of taste may be indulging their fancies in these grounds, and I often recollect how much of Burns's inspiration was probably due to his having near him the woods of Ballochmyle to ramble through at his will when he was a ragged callant."—BASIL HALL (quoted by Lockhart).

Knowledge
of nature—
Ignorance
of art.

While strolling with Sir Walter about his own grounds, a pleasure I often enjoyed, he would frequently stop and point out exactly that object or effect that would strike the eye of a painter. He said he always liked to have a dog with him in his walks, if for nothing else but to furnish a living object in the *foreground of the picture*; and he noticed to me, when we were among the hills, how much interest was given to the scene by the occasional appearance of his black greyhound, Hamlet, at unexpected points. He talked of scenery as he wrote of it, like a painter; and yet for pictures, as works of art, he had little or no taste, nor did he pretend to any. To him they were interesting merely as representing some particular scene, person, or event; and very moderate merit in their execution contented him. There were things hanging on the walls of his dining-room, which no eye possessing sensibility to what is excellent in art could have endured. . . . I am inclined to think that in music also, Scott's en-

joyment arose chiefly from the associations called up by the air, or the words of a song.—C. R. LESLIE (“Autobiographical Recollections”).

Nothing in Walter Scott struck me more than his ignorance of pictures and his indifference to music. There was not one picture of sterling merit on his walls! A young lady in the house sang divinely; but her singing gave him no pleasure. He was much too honest to affect to be what he was not; thus he admitted “that he had a reasonable good ear for a jig,” but confessed that “solos and sonatas gave him the spleen.” . . .

After dinner I had another opportunity of observing Scott's insensibility to music, when detached from association. Two sisters sang duets in French, Italian, German, and Spanish, with equal address. One had a clear soprano voice, the other a rich contralto. Their vocalization was faultless, their expression that of real feeling. I was so bewitched with their singing, that I could not refrain from an occasional glance at Scott, to see if he were proof against such captivation. But the more they sang, and the better they sang, the more impenetrable did he appear. He sat, absent, abstracted, with lip drawn down and chin resting on his gold-headed crutch, his massy eyebrows contracted, and his countenance betokening “a sad civility.” At last Mrs. Lockhart, thinking she had sufficiently taxed the good-nature of her gifted friends, uncovered her harp, and began to play the air of “Charlie is my Darling.” The change which instantly passed over the spirit of the poet's dream was most striking.

*Pictures
and music.*

*Kindled by
a Scotch
ballad.*

*Kindled by
a Scotch
ballad.*

Pride of lineage, love of chivalry, strong leanings to the Stuart cause, were all visibly fermenting in the brain of the enthusiastic bard. His light blue eyes kindled, the blood mantled in his cheek, his nostril quivered, his big chest heaved, until, unable longer to suppress the emotion evoked by his favorite melodies in favor of a ruined cause, he sprang from his chair, limped across the room, and, to the peril of those within his reach, brandishing his crutch as if it had been a brand of steel, shouted forth with more of vigor than of melody, "And a' the folk cam' running out to meet the Chevalier! Oh! Charlie is my darling," etc. (1821.)—J. C. YOUNG ("Memoir of C. M. Young").

*Indiffer-
ent to art.*

I believe he cared little for mere music; the notes failed to charm him if they were not connected with good words, or immediately associated with some history or strong sentiment, upon which his imagination could fasten. A similar observation might, I should conceive, apply to his feeling of other arts. I do not remember any picture or print at Abbotsford which was remarkable merely as a work of color or design. All, I think, either represented historical, romantic, or poetical subjects, or related to persons, places, or circumstances in which he took an interest. Even in architecture his taste had the same bias: almost every stone of his house bore an allusion or suggested a sentiment.—J. L. ADOLPHUS (quoted by Lockhart).

It is a fact which some philosophers may think worth setting down, that Scott's organization, as to

more than one of the senses, was the reverse of exquisite. He had very little of what musicians call an ear; his smell was hardly more delicate. I have seen him stare about, quite unconscious of the cause, when his whole company betrayed their uneasiness at the approach of an over-kept haunch of venison. . . . He could never tell Madeira from sherry.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

Dull senses.

Breakfast was his chief meal. . . . No fox-hunter ever prepared himself for the field by more substantial appliances. His table was always provided, in addition to the usually plentiful delicacies of a Scotch breakfast, with some solid article, on which he did most lusty execution. . . . He never tasted anything more before dinner, and at dinner he ate almost as sparingly as Squire Tovell's niece from the boarding-school. . . .

Food and drink.

He liked no wines except sparkling champagne and claret; but even as to this last he was no connoisseur; and sincerely preferred a tumbler of whisky-toddy to the most precious "liquid ruby" that ever flowed in the cup of a prince. He rarely took any other potation when alone with his family; but at the Sunday board he circulated the champagne briskly during dinner, and considered a pint of claret each man's fair share afterwards. I should not omit, however, that his Bordeaux was uniformly preceded by a small libation of the genuine *mountain dew*, which he poured with his own hand, *more majorum*, for each guest—making use for the purpose of such a multifarious collection of ancient Highland *quaighs* (little cups of curiously dove-

*Food and
drink.*

tailed wood, inlaid with silver) as no Lowland side-board but his was ever equipped with—but commonly reserving for himself one that was peculiarly precious in his eyes, as having travelled from Edinburgh to Derby in the canteen of Prince Charlie.—
J. G. LOCKHART (“Life of Scott”).

*Smoking—
precept and
practice.*

Having politely asked my permission to smoke, and strongly cautioned me against the use of tobacco in any form,¹ Sir Walter lighted a cigar.²—
R. SHELTON MACKENZIE (“Life of Scott”).

Memory.

That he should recollect every stanza of any ancient ditty of chivalry or romance that had once excited his imagination, could no longer surprise me ; but it seemed as if he remembered everything without exception, so it were in anything like the shape of verse, that he had ever read. For example, the morning after we left Allanton, we went across the country to breakfast with his friend Cranstoun (Lord Corehouse), . . . and his lordship happening to repeat a phrase, remarkable only for its absurdity, from a Magazine poem of the very silliest feebleness, which they had laughed at when at College together, Scott immediately began at the beginning, and gave it to us to the end, with apparently no more effort than if he himself had composed it the

¹ Dr. Mackenzie was at this time in his seventeenth year.

² Smokers may be glad to know that Sir Walter smoked pipes as well as cigars. In a letter to his son, he says : “As you hussars smoke I will give you one of my pipes, but you must let me know how I can send it safely. It is a very handsome one, though not my best.”

day before. I could after this easily believe a story often told by Hogg, to the effect that, lamenting in Scott's presence his having lost his only copy of a long ballad composed by him in his early days, . . . Sir Walter forthwith said, with a smile, "Take your pencil, Jemmy, and I'll dictate your ballad to you, word for word;"—which was done accordingly.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

Memory.

He, and Skene of Rubislaw, and I were out one night about midnight, leistering kippels¹ in Tweed, about the end of January, not long after the opening of the river for fishing, which was then on the tenth, . . . but when we came to kindle our light, behold our peat was gone out. This was a terrible disappointment, but to think of giving up our sport was out of the question, so we had no other shift save to send Rob Fletcher all the way through the darkness, the distance of two miles, for another fiery peat.

The night was mild, calm, and as dark as pitch, and while Fletcher was absent we three sat down on the brink of the river, on a little green sward which I never will forget, and Scott desired me to sing them my ballad of "Gilman's-cleuch." Now, be it remembered, that this ballad had never been printed, I had merely composed it by rote, and, on finishing it three years before, had sang it once over to Sir Walter. I began it, at his request, but at the eighth or ninth stanza I stuck in it, and could not get on with another verse, on which he began it again, and

¹ Spearing salmon.

Memory.

recited it every word from beginning to end. It being a very long ballad, consisting of eighty-eight stanzas, I testified my astonishment, knowing that he had never heard it but once, and even then did not appear to be paying particular attention. He said he had been out with a pleasure party as far as the opening of the Frith of Forth, and, to amuse the company, he had recited both that ballad and one of Southey's (*The Abbot of Aberbrothock*), both of which ballads he had only heard once from their respective authors, and he believed he recited them both without misplacing a word.—JAMES HOGG (*"Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott"*).

Love of the marvellous.

On subjects generally designated as the "marvellous," his mind was susceptible, and it was delicate. He loved to handle them in his own manner and at his own season, not to be pressed with them, or brought to anything like a test of belief or disbelief respecting them. There is, perhaps, in most minds, a point more or less advanced, at which incredulity on these subjects may be found to waver. Sir Walter Scott, as it seemed to me, never cared to ascertain very precisely where this point lay in his own mental constitution; still less, I suppose, did he wish the investigation to be seriously pursued by others. In no instance, however, was his colloquial eloquence more striking than when he was well launched in some "tale of wonder." The story came from him with an equally good grace, whether it was to receive a natural solution, to be smiled at as merely fantastical, or to take its chance of a serious reception.—J. L. ADOLPHUS (quoted by Lockhart).

Whenever Scott touched . . . upon local antiquities, and in all his familiar conversations upon local traditions and superstitions, there was always a sly and quiet humor running at the bottom of his discourse, and playing about his countenance, as if he sported with the subject. It seemed to me as if he distrusted his own enthusiasm, and was disposed to droll upon his own humors and peculiarities, yet, at the same time, a poetic gleam in his eye would show that he really took a strong relish and interest in them.—WASHINGTON IRVING ("Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey").

*Treatment
of super-
stitions.*

It was in correcting the proof-sheets of this novel¹ that Scott first took to equipping his chapters with mottoes of his own fabrication. On one occasion he happened to ask John Ballantyne, who was sitting by him, to hunt for a particular passage in Beaumont and Fletcher. John did as he was bid, but did not succeed in discovering the lines. "Hang it, Johnnie," cried Scott, "I believe I can make a motto sooner than you will find one." He did so accordingly; and from that hour, whenever memory failed to suggest an appropriate epigram, he had recourse to the inexhaustible mines of "*old play*" or "*old ballad*," to which we owe some of the most exquisite verses that ever flowed from his pen.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*Motto-
making.*

Mr. Laidlaw's wife was . . . one of the few to whom Scott liked lending his books; for most

¹ "The Antiquary."

*Reverence
for books.*

strict and delicate was he always in the care of them, and indeed, hardly any trivial occurrence ever seemed to touch his temper at all except anything like irreverent treatment of a book.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*The
theatre
and actors.*

He had from his boyish days a great love for theatrical representation; and so soon as circumstances enabled him to practise extended hospitality, the chief actors of his time, whenever they happened to be in Scotland, were among the most acceptable of his guests.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*Sleeping
with an un-
desirable
room-mate.*

In the course of a conversation about ghosts, fears in the dark, and such matters, Sir Walter mentioned having once arrived at a country inn, where he was told there was no bed for him. "No place to lie down at all?" said he. "No," said the people of the house—"none, except a room in which there is a dead corpse lying." "Well," said he, "did the person die of any contagious disorder?" "Oh, no—not at all," said they. "Well, then," continued he, "let me have the other bed." "So," said Sir Walter, "I laid me down, and never had a better night's sleep in my life."—BASIL HALL (quoted by Lockhart).

*A just
rebuke.*

Lest I should forget to mention it, I put down here a rebuke which . . . Sir Walter Scott once gave in my hearing to his daughter. . . . She happened to say of something, I forget what, that she could not abide it—it was *vulgar*. "My love,"

said her father, "you speak like a very young lady ; do you know, after all, the meaning of this word *vulgar* ? 'Tis only *common* ; nothing that is common, except wickedness, can deserve to be spoken of in a tone of contempt ; and when you have lived to my years, you will be disposed to agree with me in thanking God that nothing really worth having or caring about in this world is *uncommon*."—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*A just
rebuke.*

The pleasure he seemed to take in the society of his professional juniors, was one of the most remarkable, and certainly not the least agreeable features of his character ; . . . but I should rather have said, perhaps, of young people generally, male or female, law or lay, gentle or simple. I used to think it was near of kin to another feature in him, his love of a bright light. It was always, I suspect, against the grain with him, when he did not even work at his desk with the sun full upon him. —J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

*Fondness
for young
folks and
bright light.*

I must confess, that, before people of high rank, he did not much encourage my speeches and stories. He did not then hang down his brows, as when he was ill-pleased with me, but he raised them up and glowered, and put his upper lip far over the under one, seeming to be always terrified at what was to come out next, and then he generally cut me short, by some droll anecdote, to the same purport of what I was saying. In this he did not give me fair justice, for, in my own broad homely way, I am a very good speaker, and teller of a story, too.—

*Preserving
the pro-
prieties.*

JAMES HOGG ("Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott").

Swearing.

Two or three times at most during my knowledge of him do I recollect hearing him utter a downright oath, and then it was not in passion or upon personal provocation, nor was the anathema levelled at any individual. It was rather a concise expression of sentiment than a malediction. In one instance it was launched at certain improvers of the town of Edinburgh; in another it was bestowed very evenly upon all political parties in France, shortly after the *glorious days* of July 1830.—J. L. ADOLPHUS (quoted by Lockhart).

*Suppers at
Castle
Street.*

I still hold in happy memory the little suppers (a meal now lost to social life) at his house in Castle Street, of which he himself was the soul and spirit; his countenance, heavy in its ordinary aspect, kindling suddenly into life and merriment at the racy Scotch stories, which he ever had at hand to point and illustrate the matter of converse, whatever it might be. Many of these as he told them, might have been transferred almost literally to those wonderful novels which were at this time but in embryo existence. A little political sarcasm now and then stole into his conversation, but rarely if ever showed itself in any harsh or ungenerous personality,—a feeling alien, as I believe, to his nature, though I have heard him accused of it.—SIR HENRY HOLLAND ("Recollections of Past Life").¹

¹ Holland (Sir Henry). *Recollections of Past Life*. London, 1872.

In the words of his friend William Erskine, "no being was ever more entirely free than Scott from even the slightest feelings of envy, jealousy, or censoriousness, in regard to brother authors." Instead of wishing to crush rising merit, as is too often the case among the *genus irritabile*, he sincerely entered into the aims and prospects of deserving aspirants, and would have been glad to uphold and direct them. —R. P. GILLIES ("Memoirs of a Literary Veteran").

*Freedom
from jeal-
ousy.*

Those who would know how Scott bore misfortune, must read his journal, as given by Lockhart. That journal shows us a tragedy, very deep and dark, but it also brings before us a fortitude and nobility of spirit, in the highest degree inspiring. Broken in fortune, fallen from wealth to bankruptcy, he manfully sets himself to the work of discharging his obligations. Always industrious, he now redoubles his tasks. And this, when oppressed by ever-increasing bodily infirmities, and bereaved in his old age by the loss of his wife. He is still generous, giving largely out of his scanty means; ever helpful and unselfish. The old spirit of fun still shows itself in ways inexpressibly touching, breaking out into quaint and wistfully humorous doggerel. He is never more worthy of love and admiration than in these days of sorrowful toil and bereavement. Accustomed to troops of friends, and all the surroundings of wealth and luxury, he now lives in poor lodgings, alone; toiling through weary days and nights; refusing proffered help, because he is unwilling to subject his friends to the chance of loss in

*In mis-
fortune.*

the event of his death. There is space for but one quotation from this journal:

*Extract
from his
journal.*

“My reflections in entering my own gate to-day were of a very different and more pleasing cast, than those with which I left this place about six weeks ago. I was then in doubt whether I should fly my country, or become avowedly bankrupt, and surrender up my library and household furniture, with the life-rent of my estate, to sale. A man of the world will say I had better done so. No doubt, had I taken this course at once, I might have employed the money I have made since the insolvency of Constable and Robinson's houses in compounding my debts. But I could not have slept sound, as I now can, under the comfortable impression of receiving the thanks of my creditors, and the conscious feeling of discharging my duty as a man of honor and honesty. I see before me a long, tedious, and dark path, but it leads to stainless reputation. If I die in the harness, as is very likely, I shall die with honor; if I achieve my task, I shall have the thanks of all concerned, and the approbation of my own conscience. And so, I think, I can fairly face the return of Christmas-day.” (1827.)

*Quiet kind-
ness.*

There was more benevolence expressed in Scott's face than is given in any portrait of him; and I am sure there was much in his heart. It showed itself in little daily acts of quiet kindness to everybody about him. As an instance, I may mention that there was a young man, educated for the Church, but as yet without a curacy, living at Abbotsford. He was so deaf as to be obliged to use an ear-

trumpet. Sir Walter always placed him at his side at dinner; and when anything was said that he thought would interest Mr. —, he turned to him, and dropped it into his trumpet. "Look at Scott," Newton whispered to me, "dropping something into —'s charity-box."—C. R. LESLIE ("Autobiographical Recollections").

*Quiet kind-
ness.*

He was the only one I ever knew whom no man, either poor or rich, held at ill-will. I was the only exception, myself, that ever came to my knowledge, but that was only for a short season, and all the while it never lessened his interest in my welfare.

*Generally
beloved—
Delicate
charity.*

I found that he went uniformly on one system. If he could do good to any one, he would do it, but he would do harm to no man. He never resented a literary attack, however virulent, of which there were some at first, but always laughed at them. . . . Although so shy of his name and literary assistance, which, indeed, he would not grant to any one, on any account, save to Lockhart, yet to poor men of literary merit, his purse-strings were always open, so far as it was in his power to assist them. I actually knew several unsuccessful authors who for years depended on his bounty for their daily bread. And then there was a delicacy in his way of doing it, which was quite as admirable. He gave them some old papers or old ballads to copy for him, pretending to be greatly interested in them, for which he sent them a supply every week, making them believe that they were reaping the genuine fruit of their own labors.—JAMES HOGG ("Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott").

*Helpful-
ness.*

When I was in want of literary counsel and assistance, Scott was the only literary man to whom I felt that I could talk about myself and my petty concerns with the confidence and freedom that I would to an old friend—nor was I deceived—from the first moment that I mentioned my work to him in a letter, he took a decided and effective interest in it, and has been to me an invaluable friend. . . . No one ever applied to Scott for any aid, counsel, or service that would cost time and trouble, that was not most cheerfully and thoroughly assisted. Life passes away with him in a round of good offices and social enjoyments. . . . I never met with an author so completely void of all the petulance, egotism, and peculiarities of the craft.—WASHINGTON IRVING (from a letter of 1820, in the "Life of Irving").¹

*Even-
minded.*

Never, I believe, during the opportunities I had of observing him, did I hear from him an acrimonious tone, or see a shade of ill-humor on his features. In a phlegmatic person this serenity might have been less remarkable, but it was surprising in one whose mind was so susceptible, and whose voice and countenance were so full of expression. It was attributable, I think, to a rare combination of qualities—thoroughly cultivated manners, great kindness of disposition, great patience and self-control, an excellent flow of spirits, and lastly that steadfastness of nerve which, even

¹ Irving (Pierre M.). *Life and Letters of Washington Irving*. 4 vols., 12mo. New York: G. P. Putnam & Son. 1863-64.

in the inferior animals, often renders the most powerful and resolute creature the most placid and forbearing. Once, when he was exhibiting some weapons, a gentleman, after differing from him as to the comparative merits of two sword-blades, inadvertently flourished one of them almost into Sir Walter's eye. I looked quickly towards him, but could not see in his face the least sign of shrinking, or approach to a frown. No one, however, could for a moment infer from this evenness of manner and temper, that he was a man with whom an intentional liberty could be taken; and I suppose very few persons during his life ever thought of making the experiment.—J. L. ADOLPHUS (quoted by Lockhart).

Equanimity.

I shall have given a false impression of this great man's character, . . . if I have left an impression that he is all goodness and forbearance—that there is no acid in his character; for I have heard him several times as sharp as need be when there was occasion. To-day, for instance, when a recent trial, in which a beautiful actress was concerned, happened to be brought into discussion, he gave his opinion of all the parties with great force and spirit; and when the lady's father's name was mentioned as having connived at his daughter's disgrace, he exclaimed, "Well, I do not know what I would not give to have one good kick at that infernal rascal—I would give it to him," said he, drawing his chair back a foot from the table, "I would give it to him in such style as should send the vagabond out of that window as far as the Tweed. Only, God for-

A burst of wrath.

*A burst of
wrath.*

give me," added he, smiling at his own unwonted impetuosity, and drawing his chair forward quietly to the table, "only it would be too good a death for the villain; besides," said he, his good-humored manner returning as he spoke, "it would be a sad pollution to our good stream to have the drowning of such a thorough-bred miscreant as could sell his daughter's honor."—BASIL HALL (quoted by Lockhart).

*Modesty—
Simplicity.*

His conversation had neither affectation nor restraint, and he was totally free from the morbid egotism of some men of genius. What surprised me most, and in one too who had so long been the object of universal admiration, was the unaffected humility with which he spoke of his own merits, and the sort of surprise with which he viewed his own success. That this was a real feeling, none could doubt. The natural simplicity of his manner must have convinced the most incredulous. He was courteous and obliging to all, and towards women there was a dignified simplicity in his manner that was singularly pleasing. He would not allow even his infirmities to exempt him from the little courtesies of society.¹ He always endeavored to rise to address those who approached him, and once when my brother and myself accompanied him in his drive, it was not without difficulty that we could prevail on him not to seat himself with his back to the horses.—EDWARD CHENEY (quoted by Lockhart).

¹ This was in the last year of his life.

At this moment (1818), his position, take it for all in all, was, I am inclined to believe, what no other man had ever won for himself by the pen alone.

*Modesty—
Simplicity.*

. . . It was about this time that the compiler of these pages first had the opportunity of observing the plain easy modesty which had survived the many temptations of such a career; and the kindness of heart pervading, in all circumstances, his gentle deportment, which made him the rare, perhaps the solitary, example of a man signally elevated from humble beginnings, and loved more and more by his earliest friends and connexions, in proportion as he had fixed on himself the homage of the great, and the wonder of the world.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

I dined with Walter Scott, and was delighted with the unaffected simplicity of his family. Jeffrey has a singular expression, poignant, bitter, piercing—as if his countenance never lighted up but at the perception of some weakness in human nature. Whatever you praise to Jeffrey, he directly chuckles out some error that you did not perceive. Whatever you praise to Scott, he joins heartily with yourself, and directs your attention to some additional beauty. Scott throws a light on life by the beaming geniality of his soul, and so dazzles you that you have no time or perception for anything but its beauties: while Jeffrey seems to revel in holding up his hand before the light in order that he may spy out its deformities. The face of Scott is the expression of a man whose great pleasure has been to shake Nature by the hand, while to point at her

*Compared
with
Jeffrey.*

with his finger has certainly, from the expression of his face, been the chief employment of Jeffrey.—B. R. HAYDON (from a letter to Miss Mitford, 1820).¹

*With
Marjorie
Fleming.*

Sir Walter was in that house² almost every day, and had a key, so in he and the hound went, shaking themselves in the lobby. “Marjorie! Marjorie!” shouted her friend, “where are ye, my bonnie wee croodlin doo?” In a moment a bright, eager child of seven was in his arms, and he was kissing her all over. Out came Mrs. Keith. “Come yer ways in, Wattie.” “No, not now, I am going to take Marjorie wi’ me, and you may come to your tea in Duncan Roy’s sedan, and bring the bairn home in your lap.” “Tak’ Marjorie, and it *on-ding o’ snaw!*” said Mrs. Keith. He said to himself, “On-ding,—that’s odd,—that is the very word! Hoot, awa! look here,” and he displayed the corner of his plaid, made to hold lambs (the true shepherd’s plaid, consisting of two breadths sewed together, and uncut at one end, making a poke or *cal-de-sac*). “Tak’ yer lamb,” said she, laughing at the contrivance, and so the Pet was first well happit up, and then put, laughing silently, into the plaid neuk, and the shepherd strode off with his lamb,—Maida gambolling through the snow, and running races in her mirth.

Didn’t he face “the angry airt,” and make her bield his bosom, and into his own room with her,

¹ Haydon (Frederick W.). Benjamin Robert Haydon; Correspondence and Table Talk, with a Memoir. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1876.

² No. 1 North Charlotte Street, Edinburgh; the home of Mrs. Keith, Marjorie’s aunt.

and lock the door, and out with the warm, rosy, little wife, who took it all with great composure ! There the two remained for three or more hours, making the house ring with their laughter ; you can fancy the big man's and Maidie's laugh. Having made the fire cheery, he set her down in his ample chair, and standing sheepishly before her, began to say his lesson, which happened to be,—“Ziccotty, diccotty, dock, the mouse ran up the clock, the clock struck wan, down the mouse ran, ziccotty, diccotty, dock.” This done repeatedly, till she was pleased, she gave him his new lesson, gravely and slowly, timing it upon her small fingers,—he saying it after her,—

*With
Marjorie
Fleming.*

“Wonery, twoery, tickery, seven ;
Alibi, crackaby, ten, and eleven ;
Pin, pan, musky, dan ;
Tweedle-um, twoddle-um,
Twenty-wan ; eerie, orie, ourie,
You, are, out.”

He pretended to great difficulty, and she rebuked him with most comical gravity, treating him as a child. He used to say that when he came to Alibi Crackaby he broke down, and Pin-Pan, Musky-Dan, Tweedle-um Twoddle-um made him roar with laughter. He said *Musky-Dan* especially was beyond endurance, bringing up an Irishman and his hat fresh from the Spice Islands and odoriferous Ind ; she getting quite bitter in her displeasure at his ill-behavior and stupidity.

Then he would read ballads to her in his own glorious way, the two getting wild with excitement over *Gil Morrice* or the *Baron of Smailholm* ; and he would take her on his knee, and make her repeat

Constance's speeches in *King John*, till he swayed to and fro, sobbing his fill.—DR. JOHN BROWN ("Marjorie Fleming").¹

*The last
scene.*

As I was dressing on the morning of Monday the 17th of September, Nicolson came into my room, and told me that his master had awoke in a state of composure and consciousness, and wished to see me immediately. I found him entirely himself, though in the last extreme of feebleness. His eye was clear and calm—every trace of the wild fire of delirium extinguished. "Lockhart," he said, "I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man—be virtuous—be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here."—He paused, and I said, "Shall I send for Sophia and Anne?" "No," said he, "don't disturb them. Poor souls! I know they were up all night—God bless you all." With this he sunk into a very tranquil sleep, and, indeed, he scarcely afterwards gave any sign of consciousness, except for an instant on the arrival of his sons. . . . About half-past one P.M., on the 21st of September, Sir Walter breathed his last, in the presence of all his children. It was a beautiful day—so warm that every window was wide open—and so perfectly still, that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his oldest son kissed and closed his eyes.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Life of Scott").

¹ Brown (John, M.D.). *Marjorie Fleming*. 16mo. Boston, 1864. (Originally published in the *North British Review*; reprinted in *Spare Hours*. 2 vols. Boston, 1866.)

JAMES HOGG.

1770-1835.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

FROM the days of gossiping Colley Cibber to our own time, men who have essayed to write the story of their lives have not been noted for excess of diffidence, but, rather, have manifested a quite sincere and fully developed appreciation of themselves. Hogg, however, occupies a unique position among these literary egotists ; other men have been content to write one autobiography—but this was not nearly enough for Hogg. He said, “I like to write about myself : in fact there are few things which I like better”—and he proved the sincerity of this statement, and amply gratified his favorite propensity, by issuing, from time to time, various accounts of his life. His egotism and vanity are all the more entertaining for the frank simplicity with which he displays them ; and the ingenuousness of the man goes far toward reconciling us to his foibles.

Evidently he had many admirable qualities, and, perhaps, the worst that can be said of him is, that his assertions cannot always be received with entire confidence. It does not appear that he was wilfully untruthful, but his proneness to extravagance and exaggeration tends to impair the authenticity of his statements.

Among the uneducated writers, who have risen to eminence by sheer force of native ability, there is no quainter or more interesting figure than this rough, untaught, Scottish shepherd. His anomalous position in the society of his time, at once piques and baffles our curiosity. Manners have indeed undergone a great change within the last fifty years ; but the greatness of the change does not suffice to explain why this man was tolerated, why he was suffered so to outrage the decorum of polite society. He was received, upon equal terms, by delicate, high-born ladies, who allowed him to put his feet upon their sofas, and to stun their well-bred ears with the loudest outbursts of his bacchanalian glee. Nay, more—these same ladies permitted him to address them by their Christian names, and to slap them familiarly upon their dainty backs ! Assuredly “there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.” One can only conjecture that there must have been a personal charm about the man, much stronger and more attractive than appears in any of the accounts of him—even of his own.

In addition to his autobiography, and his “Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott,” the following works contain interesting notices of Hogg : R. S. Mackenzie’s edition of the “Noctes Ambrosianæ ;” Lockhart’s “Life of Scott ;” S. C. Hall’s “Book of Memories ;” R. P. Gillies’s “Memorials ;” Lockhart’s “Peter’s Letters ;” the “Autobiography” and “Men I have Known” of William Jerdan ; and a sketch in *Blackwood’s Magazine*, September, 1882, being one of a series entitled “Lights of Maga.”

LEADING EVENTS OF HOGG'S LIFE.

1770. Born, December 9th, in Ettrick, Selkirkshire.¹
1790.—(Aged 20.) Enters the service of William Laidlaw as a shepherd.
1794.—(Aged 24.) Makes his first appearance in print, "Mistakes of a Night," published in the *Scots Magazine*.
1801.—(Aged 31.) Publishes "The Patriot Lay."
1803.—(Aged 33.) Publishes "The Shepherd's Guide," and "The Mountain Bard."
1810.—(Aged 40.) Edits "The Spy."
1813.—(Aged 43.) Publishes "The Queen's Wake."
1817.—(Aged 47.) Contributes to *Blackwood*.
1818.—(Aged 48.) Publishes "The Brownie of Bodsbeck," and other tales.
1820.—(Aged 50.) Marries Miss Margaret Phillips.
1826.—(Aged 56.) Publishes "Queen Hynde."
1832.—(Aged 62.) Publishes "Altrive Tales."
1834.—(Aged 64.) Publishes "Lay Sermons."
1835.—(Aged 64 years and 11 months.) Publishes "Montrose Tales." Dies, November 21st.

¹ Hogg himself asserted that he was born in 1772, upon the birthday of Burns, January 25th. But the parish register of Hogg's native place gives the date recorded above.

JAMES HOGG.

ALTHOUGH for some time past he has spent a considerable portion of every year in excellent, even in refined society, the external appearance of the man can have undergone but very little change since he was "a herd on Yarrow." His face and hands are still as brown as if he had lived entirely *sub dio*. His very hair has a coarse stringiness about it, which proves beyond dispute its utter ignorance of all the arts of the friseur; and hangs in playful whips and cords about his ears, in a style of the most perfect innocence imaginable. His mouth, which, when he smiles, nearly cuts the totality of his face in twain, is an object that would make the Chevalier Ruspini die with indignation; for his teeth have been allowed to grow where they listed, and as they listed, presenting more resemblance, in arrangement (and color too), to a body of crouching sharpshooters, than to any more regular species of array. The effect of a forehead, towering with a true poetic grandeur above such features as these, and of an eye that illuminates their surface with the genuine lightnings of genius— . . . these are things which I cannot so easily transfer to my paper.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk," 1819).

*Personal
appearance.*

*Personal
appearance.*

Up rose a man, hale and hearty as a mountain breeze, fresh as a branch of hill-side heather, with a visage unequivocally Scotch, high cheek-bones, a sharp and clear grey eye, an expansive forehead, sandy hair, and with ruddy cheeks, which the late nights and late mornings of a month in London had not yet sallowed. His form was manly and muscular,¹ and his voice strong and gladsome, with a rich Scottish accent. . . . His appearance that evening² may be described by one word, . . . it WAS HEARTY!—S. C. HALL (“Book of Memories”).³

His hair in his younger days was auburn, slightly inclining to yellow, which afterwards became dark brown, mixed with grey; his eyes, which were dark blue, were bright and intelligent. His features were irregular, while his eye and ample forehead redeemed the countenance from every charge of commonplace homeliness. S. C. HALL (“Book of Memories”).

In society . . . his glowing and kindly countenance, his rousing and hearty laugh, the quaintness of his remarks, his gentle or biting satire, the continual flow of homely wit, the rough but perfectly becoming manner in which he sung his own Jacobite songs, all gained for him personally the

¹ His height was five feet ten inches and a half.

² The occasion was a public dinner given to him in London, in 1832.

³ Hall (Samuel Carter). *A Book of Memories of Great Men and Women of the Age.* 4to. London, 1876.

golden opinions previously accorded to his writings.¹—S. C. HALL (“Book of Memories”).

I had no method of learning to write save by following the italic alphabet; and though I always stripped myself of coat and vest when I began to pen a song, yet my wrist took a cramp, so that I could rarely make above four or five lines at a sitting. Whether my manner of writing it out was new, I know not, but it was not without singularity. Having very little spare time from my flock, which was unruly enough, I folded and stitched a few sheets of paper, which I carried in my pocket. I had no ink-horn, but in place of it I borrowed a small phial, which I fixed in a hole in the breast of my waistcoat; and having a cork fastened by a piece of twine, it answered my purpose fully as well. Thus equipped, whenever a leisure minute or two offered, and I had nothing else to do, I sat down and wrote out my thoughts as I found them. This is still my invariable practice in writing prose. I cannot make out one sentence by study without the pen in my hand to catch the ideas as they rise, and I never write two copies of the same thing. My manner of composing poetry is very different, and, I believe, much more singular. Let the piece be of what length it will, I compose and correct it wholly in my mind, or on a slate, ere ever I put pen to paper; and then I write it down as fast as the A, B, C. When once it is written, it remains in that state; it being with the utmost difficulty that I

*Education
and meth-
ods of work.*

¹ See page 92.

can be brought to alter one syllable.—JAMES HOGG ("Autobiography").¹

Equability
—Issue of
his first
volume.

Hogg had his joyous moods seemingly without any reaction of gloom; with the help of "the slate," he composed with great facility, and had a dislike to corrections afterwards; his temper was sustained and equable; his ambition, though steadfast, was of a quiet character, and though baffled, as it often happened, in his purpose, he was never for a moment cast down.

Surely there never has been any instance of the pursuit of literature under circumstances more untoward than those which the Shepherd so cheerfully encountered. Take, for example, the difficulties attending his first attempt at publication. Being appointed to the vastly pleasant and poetical task of driving a herd of cattle from Ettrick to Edinburgh . . . in the dreary month of November, he suddenly conceived the notion of getting a volume into print, but having no manuscript in hand, he tried during his walks to remember the verses, and as often as they recurred ran into a shop to borrow a stump of pen and morsel of paper to note them down. In this way copy was provided; luckily for his purpose, he found a good-natured printer, and an octavo volume, or pamphlet, was produced in a week, with which he returned in triumph to the forest.—R. P. GILLIS ("Memoirs of a Literary Veteran").

¹ Hogg (James). Poetical Works. With Autobiography. 5 vols., 16mo. Glasgow, Edinburgh, and London, 1838-40.

His manners and joviality, combined with his shrewdness, discretion, and ready wit, imparted a rare degree of novelty and zest to the parties to which we went together. His simplicity and talent for entertaining a company rendered him the "Whistle Binkie," or soul of the revels, . . . and it was all the same who were his auditors, like the musician with the magic pipe, he enchanted every one to dance after him, and English and Irish, as well as Scotch, were sure to be charmed with his quaintness and his genius. At Sir George Warrender's, whose cellar was the *ne plus ultra*, he persuaded such a trinational assemblage of a dozen to abandon the claret and stick to the whisky-toddy, which he brewed with anxious particularity and ladled out with beaming good-will. At the Chief of the Macleods' he sang an anti-Whig satire, and being told, when finished, that the Duke of Argyle was at the table, he quickly cried, "Never mind, mon," and rattled out the ballad of "Donald McGillivray," on the other political side of the question.—WILLIAM JERDAN ("Autobiography").¹

A general favorite.

Among other good things he contributed to our amusement, music was one. Before the ladies left the dining-room, he insisted upon having a violin put into his hands, and really produced a measure of sweet sounds, quite beyond what I should have expected from the workmanship of such horny fingers. It seems, however, that he has long been

Plays the fiddle.

¹ Jerdan (William). *Autobiography*. 4 vols., 12mo. London, 1852-53.

accustomed to minister in this way at the fairs and penny-weddings in Ettrick.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk").

Hogg's comments on his own work.

About this time ¹ James Hogg tenanted a room at a suburban residence near Stockbridge. It was a weather-beaten, rather ghostly, solitary-looking domicile, like an old farm-house in the country. At this tranquil abode he finished within an incredibly short time the "Queen's Wake," which, as he said, when once begun, "went on of itself." Indeed, he always ascribed a separate vitality and *volanté* to his compositions, so that it was not his business to carry them on; on the contrary, they carried on their author, and carried him away, till at last he wondered even more than others did, at his own work! "Aye, ye're a learned man," he sometimes said to me in after years; "there's nae doubt about that, wi' your Virgils, and Homers, and Dantes, and Petrarchs. But aiblins ye mind yon fragment upon the slate ² that ye despised t'ither morning. Eh, man, sin syne, it's ettling to turn out the vera best thing I ever composed; and that's no saying little, ye ken!" R. P. GILLIES ("Memoirs," etc.).

A characteristic chat.

As I had little or no acquaintance with the select society which the Ettrick Shepherd frequented at Edinburgh, I followed Professor Wilson's advice, and called on him without ceremony. . . . To my agreeable surprise, I was received as cordially,

¹ 1813.

² Slate.

and with as little ceremony, as if there had been a previous acquaintance between us of many years. I found him with his publisher, Mr. Goldie, who soon took his leave, and on my surmising that my visit had interrupted business, he desired me to be quiet on that score, as no visits could be more unimportant to him than those of his publisher. "I have been trying this half hour," said he, "to bring him to business, but ye micht as weel try to grip an eel by the tail."

A characteristic chat.

"But the 'Queen's Wake' ought to be a fortune to its author," said I; "and it will not always do for a poet to rest content with deserving reward which he never gains."

"The fortune will no come oot o' Goldie then," said the Shepherd; "he has never paid saxpence yet, unless it be to the printer, and even that's no settled. But aiblins ye think owre muckle o' the 'Queen's Wake.' It's tolerably gude, I'll no deny that; but, eh man, that's naething compared wi' what I am able to do! I hae a grand poyem upon the sclate yenoo, that fashes me rather, for it wants to rin faster than I can copy wi' the pen. Ye'll think but little o' the 'Queen's Wake' when ye come to see that!"

The "sclate" was before him, covered with very close writing, and I naturally expressed a wish to hear some portion of what must be so extraordinary, to which he responded briskly—"Na, na, fules and bairns should never see wark half done!" I insisted that Voltaire had his old woman, and that Scott had been in the habit of consulting with William Erskine and other friends on his poems as

The "sclate."

*The
"sclate."*

they advanced. "That's vera like a man that's frightened to gang by himsel, and needs somebody to lead him! Eh man, neither William Erskine, nor ony critic beneath the sun shall ever lead *mei*! If I hae na sense enouch to mak and mend my ain wark, no other hands or heads shall meddle wi' it; I want nae help, thank God, neither from books nor men."

*Harmless
vanity.*

Be it here observed once for all, that the good Shepherd's vanity differed from that of all other authors, inasmuch as it was avowed and undisguised, and he himself laughed at it objectively as such. It never for one instant appeared to me as arrogance or self-conceit; on the contrary, it was mere native eccentricity, or in better words, decision of character. He had great power and facility of composition after his own manner; was naturally conscious of this power, and of course placed reliance on himself. As to Fortune's smiles or frowns, he little needed to care. Every day he was sure of being hospitably received somewhere or another at dinner, after which came unfailingly the Glenlivet punch; and as for his house-rent and all expenses of living in other respects, I suppose 25% per annum (perhaps less) would have been ample.—R. P. GILLIES ("Memoirs of a Literary Veteran").

*Carlyle's
dictum.*

Hogg is a little red-skinned stiff sack of a body, with quite the common air of an Ettrick shepherd, except that he has a highish though sloping brow (among his yellow grizzled hair), and two clear little beads of blue or gray eyes, that sparkle, if not with thought, yet with animation. Behaves himself quite

easily and well ; speaks Scotch, and mostly narrative absurdity (or even obscenity) therewith. Appears in the mingled character of zany and raree-show. All bent on bantering him, especially Lockhart ;¹ Hogg walking through it as if unconscious, or almost flattered. His vanity seems to be immense, but also his good-nature. I felt interest for the poor "herd body," wondered to see him blown hither from his sheepfolds, and how, quite friendless as he was, he went along cheerful, mirthful, and musical.—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Extract from Notebook").²

*Carlyle's
dictum.*

Moore once told Lord and Lady Lansdowne, at Bowood, when I was present, that he had been invited, when in Edinburgh, by Blackwood to one of his suppers at Ambrose's. On going there he found many that he knew—Scott, Lockhart, . . . and three or four ladies ; and, among their number two peeresses, who had, only that very day, begged for an invitation, in the hope of meeting Moore. Their presence being unexpected by a majority of the club, the members had dropped in in their morning dress ; while the two ladies "of high degree," were in full evening costume, or, as Moore described it, "in shoulders." When supper was half over, James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, appeared. A chair had been designedly left vacant for him be-

*A peculiar
stimulant.*

¹ The occasion was a dinner at Fraser's, in 1832.

² Froude (James Anthony). Thomas Carlyle. *A History of the First Forty Years of his Life.* 2 vols., 8vo. London and New York, 1882.

*A peculiar
stimulant.*

tween the two aristocrats. His approach was discernible before his presence was visible; for he came straight from a cattle fair, and was reeking with the unsavory odors of the sheep and pigs and oxen, in whose company he had been for hours. Nevertheless he soon made himself at home with the fair ladies on each side of him; somewhat too much so; for, supper over, the cloth withdrawn, and the toddy introduced, the song going round, and his next-door neighbors being too languid in their manner of joining in the chorus to please him, he turned first to the right hand, then to the left, and slapped both of them on their backs with such good will as to make their blade bones ring again; then, with the yell of an Ojibbaway Indian, he shouted forth, "Noo then, leddies, follow me! 'Heigh tutti, tutti! Heigh tutti tutti!'"—J. C. YOUNG ("Memoir of C. M. Young").

*"Noo then,
leddies!"*

*A literary
party.*

Mrs. Hall describes an evening party at our house, in which, among the guests, were James Hogg, Maria Edgeworth, Allan Cunningham. . . . This is the portrait she then drew of Hogg:—"I can recall James Hogg sitting on the sofa—his countenance flushed with the excitement and the 'toddy'—
. . . . expressing wild earnestness, not, I thought, unmixed with irascibility. He was then, certainly, more like a buoyant Irishman than a steady son of the soil of the thistle, as he shouted forth, in an untunable voice, songs that were his own especial favorites, giving us some account of the origin of each at its conclusion. One I particularly remember—'The Women Folk.' 'Ha, ha!' he exclaimed,

echoing our applause with his own broad hands—
 ‘that song, which I am often forced to sing to the
laddies, sometimes against my will, that song never
 will be sung so well again by any one after I ha’
 done wi’ it.’ I remember Allan Cunningham’s com-
 ment, ‘That’s because you have the *nature* in you!’ ”
 —S. C. HALL (“Book of Memoirs”).

*A literary
party.*

I think the appearance of the good honest Shep-
 herd in our Edinburgh society, acquired by degrees
 a marked influence on the tone of that society, and
 even gave a new impetus to our literature. Num-
 berless were the convivial parties at dinner and
 supper, which, but for him, would never have taken
 place at all, and but for his quaint originality of
 manners and inexhaustible store of good songs,
 would have been comparatively so *fade* and lifeless,
 that no one would have desired a repetition.—R. P.
 GILLIES (“Memoirs of a Literary Veteran”).

*Influence
upon
Edinburgh
society.*

Scott . . . invited him to dinner in Castle
 Street. . . . When Hogg entered the drawing-
 room, Mrs. Scott, being at the time in a delicate
 state of health, was reclining on a sofa. The Shep-
 herd, after being presented, and making his best
 bow, forthwith took possession of another sofa,
 placed opposite to hers, and stretched himself there-
 upon at all his length; for, as he said afterwards,
 “I thought I could never do wrong to copy the
 lady of the house.” As his dress at this period was
 precisely that in which any ordinary herdsman at-
 tends cattle to the market, and his hands, moreover,
 bore most legible marks of a recent sheep-shearing,

*Making
himself at
home.*

*Making
himself at
home.*

the lady of the house did not observe with perfect equanimity the novel usage to which her chintz was exposed. The Shepherd, however, remarked nothing of all this—dined heartily, and drank freely, and, by jest, anecdote, and song, afforded plentiful merriment to the more civilized part of the company. As the liquor operated, his familiarity increased and strengthened; from “Mr. Scott,” he advanced to “Sherra,” and thence to “Scott,” “Walter,” and “Wattie,” until, at supper, he fairly convulsed the whole party by addressing Mrs. Scott as “Charlotte.”—J. G. LOCKHART (“Life of Scott”).

*Manners in
later life.*

In the latter period of his life, when brought to mix with the most refined circles of society of London for a brief season, his ready adaptation of his manners to the company was absolutely marvellous. Never forgetting, and never obtruding himself when urged to a display of his talents, he so acquitted himself as to become an object of genuine admiration and interest to all who had the pleasure to witness these coruscations of genius.—WILLIAM JERDAN (“Men I have Known”).¹

Simplicity.

I remember, when I once happened to comment in enthusiastic terms upon some verses which had struck me as being most admirable of their kind, the honest Shepherd rejoined: “Surely ye’re daft; it’s only joost true about the wee birdies, and the cows at e’en, and the wild flowers, and the sunset and clouds, and things, and the feelin’s they cre-at.

¹ Jerdan (William). Men I have Known. 8vo. London, 1866.

A' (I) canna fathom what ye're making a' this fuss about. It's joost a plain description of what every body can see : there's nae grand poetry in it." Such was the opinion of some of the sweetest and most natural compositions in the Scottish Doric, entertained and expressed by their author.—WILLIAM JERDAN ("Men I have Known").

Simplicity.

His vanity was so inartificial as to be absolutely amusing ; he avowed, and seemed proud of it, as one of his natural rights. "I like to write about myself—" that sentence begins his Autobiography ; and the sensation is kept up to the end.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

The historian of his singular and wayward life has little to say to his discredit, and nothing to his dishonor. . . . Wayward, indeed, he was. He quarrelled with his true friend, Scott, but the magnanimous man sought a reconciliation with his irritable brother. To Wilson, another true friend, he wrote a letter, which according to his own admission, was "full of abusive epithets."¹ With all the publishers he was perpetually at war.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

Irrascibility.

Never was any mortal more free from that weakness which is of all the most repulsive in social intercourse—the desire for *effect* and *display*. His demeanor and conversation were at all times quite as

Unaffected.

¹ He once wrote a letter to Constable, which began after this fashion—"D—d Sir!"

unaffected as if he had been at his paternal fireside in Ettrick forest.—ANON. (*Fraser's Magazine*, October, 1839).

*A meta-
physician.*

Hogg in one of his poems . . . had dabbled a little in metaphysics. . . . Blackwood, who began to affect criticism, argued stoutly with him as to the necessity of omitting or elucidating some obscure passage. Hogg was immovable. "But, man," said Blackwood, "I dinna ken what ye mean in this passage." "Hout tout, man," replied Hogg, impatiently, "I dinna ken always what I mean myself." There is many a metaphysical poet in the same predicament with honest Hogg.—WASHINGTON IRVING ("Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey").

*A general
view.*

The great beauty of this man's deportment, to my mind, lies in the unaffected simplicity with which he retains, in many respects, the external manners and appearance of his original station—blending all, however, with a softness and manly courtesy, derived, perhaps, in the main, rather from the natural delicacy of his mind and temperament, than from the influence of anything he has learned by mixing more largely in the world. He is truly a most interesting person—his conversation is quite picturesque and characteristic, both in its subjects and its expression—his good humor is unalterable, and his discernment most acute—and he bears himself with a happy mixture of modesty and confidence, such as well becomes a man of genius, who has been born and bred in poverty, and who is still far from being rich, but who has forfeited, at no

moment of his career, his claim to the noble consciousness of perfect independence.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk," 1819).

I am an old man, and, of course, my sentiments are those of an old man; but I am not like one of those crabbed philosophers who rail at the state which they cannot reach, for, in sincerity of heart, I believe that hitherto no man has enjoyed a greater share of felicity than I have. It is well known in what a labyrinth of poverty and toil my life has been spent, but I never repined. . . . I have rejoiced in the prosperity of my friends, and have never envied any man's happiness. . . . I have always accustomed myself to think more on what I have than on what I want.—JAMES HOGG ("Lay Sermons").¹

*His own
view of his
life.*

On the whole, he led a happy life. "Some may think," he writes, "that I must have worn out a life of misery and wretchedness; but the case has been quite the reverse. I never knew either man or woman who has been so uniformly happy as I have been; which has been partly owing to a good constitution, and partly to the conviction that a heavenly gift, conferring the powers of immortal song, was inherent in my soul. Indeed, so uniformly smooth and happy has my married life been, that, on a retrospect, I cannot distinguish one part from another, save by some remarkably good days of

¹ Hogg (James). Series of Lay Sermons on Good Breeding. 16mo. London, 1834.

fishing, shooting, and curling on the ice.”—S. C. HALL (“Book of Memories”).

*Domestic
and social
virtues.*

We have other testimony beside his own that the goodness of his nature made the happiness of his life. The Rev. James Russell, of Yarrow, at a festival in honor of the poet, when the statue was inaugurated, thus . . . referred to the social and domestic habits and feelings of the poet he had long known and loved :—

“Much it testified for his home affections that, while spending a season in London, where he was fêted and flattered by all parties, he sent down ‘a New Year’s Gift for his children,’ in the form of a few simple prayers and hymns, written expressly for their use. I cannot forget him as a kind master of a household, indulgent perhaps to a fault, nor how he was wont, as the Sabbath evening came round, to take down the ‘big ha’ Bible, ance his father’s pride,’ for the worship of God. . . . I cannot forget the attractions of his social companionship, his lively fancy, nor his flashes of merriment that set the table in a roar. I cannot forget his intense sympathy with the joys and sorrows of cottage-life, nor his generous aid in bringing the means of education (all the more valued from his own early disadvantages) within the reach of the shepherds and peasantry around him.”—S. C. HALL (“Book of Memories”).

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

1777-1844.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

MANY pleasant things are recorded of Campbell—of his generosity, enthusiasm, benevolence ; yet the picture of the man, the general impression of him derived from the various accounts of his contemporaries, is by no means agreeable, and one feels that he was hardly a man whom it would have been desirable to know intimately.

The dandy's instinct shows itself pretty clearly in his excessive anxiety about his personal appearance ; and in addition to the general vulgarity inherent in all dandyism, he was guilty of a specific, particular vulgarity—he dyed his whiskers. His extreme sensitiveness, and his lack of self-restraint made him prone to take offence upon trivial grounds, and disqualified him for animated debate. He was an amusing table companion, and could tell a good story with much zest and spirit, but he had none of that humor which is the most valuable for one's personal comfort—the humor which enables a man to make merry at his own expense, and to join heartily in the laughter excited by his own mishaps. On the contrary, his self-consciousness was so mor-

bidly keen that a slight accident, the unlooked-for misbehavior of a chair whereon he had seated himself, was enough to drive him in utter discomfiture from the house of a personal friend, and to prevent him from ever entering that house again.

But these characteristics, together with some others, equally undesirable, do not justify a very grave indictment against a man. Men have been more foppish than Campbell, more hysterically sensitive, more lacking in self-defensive humor, more afflicted by self-consciousness—and yet have won the respect, nay, even the liking, of their fellows. The radical trouble in this case lies deeper. It is found in the fact that, upon the whole, the records of those who knew Campbell not only convey an impression of pettiness, but also beget a strong suspicion of half-heartedness and insincerity.

Campbell's life was written by his friend and physician, Dr. William Beattie. The reader may perhaps be thankful that few extracts have been made from Dr. Beattie's three volumes, when he reads the following specimen of the Doctor's style : — "No brilliant coruscations of his pristine genius to rival early glories flashed through the gloom that thickened around his advancing years." Cyrus Redding published "Literary Reminiscences and Memoirs of Thomas Campbell," in two volumes. See, also, Leigh Hunt's "Autobiography;" P. G. Patmore's "My Friends and Acquaintances;" S. C. Hall's "Book of Memories;" several anonymous articles in the *Dublin University Magazine* of 1845; and an anonymous article in *Fraser's Magazine*, September, 1844.

LEADING EVENTS OF CAMPBELL'S LIFE.

1777. Born, July 27th, in Glasgow.
- 1791.—(Aged 14.) Enters Glasgow University.
- 1795.—(Aged 17-18.) Goes to the Isle of Mull, as a tutor, in May ; returns to the University in the autumn.
- 1796.—(Aged 19.) Graduates, and becomes a tutor in Argyleshire.
- 1797.—(Aged 20.) Goes to Edinburgh, and becomes a clerk in a law office.
- 1799.—(Aged 22.) Publishes "The Pleasures of Hope."
- 1800.—(Aged 23.) Goes abroad.
- 1801.—(Aged 24.) Returns to England.
- 1803.—(Aged 26.) Marries Miss Matilda Sinclair.
- 1805.—(Aged 28.) Receives a pension of two hundred pounds per annum.
- 1809.—(Aged 32.) Publishes "Gertrude of Wyoming."
- 1812.—(Aged 35.) Lectures upon poetry before the Royal Institution.
- 1820.—(Aged 43.) Revisits Germany. Edits the *Monthly Magazine*.
- 1827.—(Aged 50.) Lord Rector of Glasgow University.
- 1828.—(Aged 51.) His wife dies.
- 1830.—(Aged 53.) Resigns editorship of the *Monthly*, and edits the *Metropolitan Magazine*.
- 1834.—(Aged 57.) Publishes "Life of Mrs. Siddons."
- 1841.—(Aged 64.) Publishes "Life of Petrarch."
- 1842.—(Aged 65.) Publishes "The Pilgrim of Glencoe."
- 1843.—(Aged 66.) Publishes "Life of Frederick the Great," and goes to Boulogne.
- 1844.—(Aged 66 years and 10 months.) Dies, June 15th.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

THERE is little or no definite information about the childhood of Campbell, and we have no means of knowing what sort of a boy he was. His biographer, Dr. Beattie, records that he was a precocious scholar, that he wrote poetry at a very early age, that he earned money as a tutor when he was in his fourteenth year, and that he gained many poetical prizes at college. Beyond this, there is no trustworthy record of his early years.

Youth.

Campbell was rather under than above the middle size; his voice was low, almost to weakness, and inharmonious; the expression of his countenance indicated the sensitiveness of his mind; his lips were thin; his nose finely and delicately chiselled; his eyes large and of a deep blue; and his manners, though without frankness and lacking dignity, were bland and insinuating. Lockhart thus describes him:—"Thomas Campbell has a poor skull upwards compared with what one might have looked for in him; but the lower part of the forehead is exquisite, and the features are extremely good, though tiny." . . . Miss Mitford thus describes him at one of his lectures:—"Campbell's person is ex-

*Personal
appearance.*

tremely insignificant, his voice weak, his reading detestable—neither English nor Scotch.”—S. C. HALL (“Book of Memories”).

*Personal
appearance.*

There is a smirk on his face which would befit a shopman or an auctioneer. His very eye has the cold vivacity of a conceited worldling. His talk is small, contemptuous, and shallow. The blue frock and trousers, the eye-glass, the wig, the very fashion of his bow, proclaim the literary dandy.—THOMAS CARLYLE (Letter of 1824, in Froude’s “Carlyle”).

He has, considering his advanced age, a full round face, with a dark complexion. His forehead does not appear to be so amply developed as it really is, owing to his brown wig overlapping the upper part of it.¹—JAMES GRANT (“Portraits of Public Characters”).²

He was generally careful as to dress, and had none of Dr. Johnson’s indifference to fine linen. His wigs (of which he had a great number) were always nicely adjusted, and scarcely distinguishable from natural hair; while about an inch of whisker on the cheek was colored with some dark powder, to correspond with the wig. His appearance was interesting and handsome. Though rather below the middle size, he did not seem little; and his large dark eye and countenance altogether bespoke great

¹ Mr. S. C. Hall tells us that Campbell grew bald when a mere youth, and wore a wig when he was only twenty-five years old.

² Grant (James). *Portraits of Public Characters*. London, 1841.

sensibility and acuteness. His thin quivering lip¹ and delicate nostril were highly expressive.—ANON. (*Chambers's Journal*, February, 1845).

My first meeting with Campbell was accidental. It was at one of the Polish balls at Guildhall. . . . I had not been many minutes in the room, when there suddenly came up to the spot in which I and my friend stood, a small thin man, with a remarkably cunning and withered face, eyes cold and glassy, like those of a dead haddock, a brown wig neatly fitted on, a blue coat, not of the newest, with brass or gilt buttons, and a buff waistcoat. He had no gloves, and his hands were coarse and wrinkled. His eyebrows were thick and slightly grey, and though the lines of the face denoted an inner man of much sagacity and shrewdness, their outward expression was the most vacant and unmeaning in the world; and it was painful to look and *think* how heartbroken must be the spirit that animated so cold and cynical a countenance. . . . There was something remarkably mean and vulgar in his face; the lips were thin and the reverse of juicy or joyous; but the brow was good, though not high, or indicative of great mental power; and he came into the room with more of a smirk than became a person of his years, and with an evident contempt for the company which he was about to join.—ANON. (*Dublin University Magazine*, 1845).

*Personal
appearance.*

¹ The writer of an anonymous article in *Fraser's Magazine*, September, 1844, says, "His lips were thin, and on a constant twitter."

Conversa-
tion.

Mr. Campbell was not a communicative man ; he knew much, but was seldom in the mood to tell what he knew. He preferred a smart saying, or a seasoned or seasonable story ; he trifled in his table talk, and you might sound him about his contemporaries to very little purpose. Lead the conversation as you liked, Campbell was sure to direct it a different way. . . . You could seldom awaken a recollection of the dead within him ; the mention of no eminent contemporary's name called for a sigh, or an anecdote, or a kind expression. He did not love the past—he lived for to-day and for to-morrow.¹—ANON. (*Fraser's Magazine*, September, 1844).

No laugh-
ter.

He spoke mechanically, more because he was expected to say something, than from any apparent pleasure in delivering his opinion. He sometimes indulged in a grim smile, but a hearty burst of laughter, I am persuaded, never crossed his countenance. It was not made indeed for a laughing animal, for the extreme thinness of the lips rendered it unpleasing to look at.—ANON. (*Dublin University Magazine*, 1845).

He was cheerful in general society, agreeable and

¹ Another anonymous writer, quoted in Beattie's *Life of Campbell*, says :—" We always liked to hear him speak of other poets, and of authors ; because he did so with natural candor—never affecting anything about them which he did not feel. . . . He alluded with genuine simplicity to his own feelings, on receiving praise and honor as a poet :—' You did not do all this to Burns ; you neglected him—a real genius—a wonder ! And you bestow all this on me, who am nothing, compared to him.' "

communicative in the social circle, and his conversation abounded in pointed humor. It was, however, sometimes so irreverent as to make the listener ask if he were really the author of "*The Pleasures of Hope*;" and his anecdotes were not always kept "within the limits of becoming mirth."—S. C. HALL ("*Book of Memories*").

*A loose
talker.*

They who knew Mr. Campbell only as the author of *Gertrude of Wyoming*, and the *Pleasures of Hope*, would not have suspected him to be a merry companion, overflowing with humor and anecdote, and anything but fastidious.—LEIGH HUNT ("*Autobiography*").¹

Campbell's broad Scotch accent surprised me a good deal. . . . He spoke like a man freshly imported from the savage wilds of the highlands.—ANON. (*Dublin University Magazine*, 1845).

Accent.

He spoke with a marked Scotch accent, which added a zest, allied to humor, to the amusing anecdotes and stories which he told so well. When in this facetious mood, there was a roguish twinkle in his eye; and you could hardly conceive the touching and impressive poet to be hid behind the mantling smile and genial chuckle.—WILLIAM JERDAN ("*Men I have Known*").

Campbell's was a curiously mixed character, par-

¹ Hunt (James Henry Leigh). *Autobiography and Reminiscences*. 3 vols., 16mo. London, 1850.

*Irritability
and
jealousy.*

taking of the sublime and the ridiculous in an extraordinary degree. In this respect there was a certain similarity between him and Goldsmith, as the latter is handed down to us in his social habits and high poetic mission—the

“Noll,

Who wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll.”

Campbell's conversation was not of this absurd description, but his head was easily affected, and then a remarkable jealousy respecting any merely civil courtesies from the fair sex, bestowed on others, and a puerility of manner between boyishness and coxcombry, seemed to be the attributes of the metamorphosed bard.—WILLIAM JERDAN (“Autobiography”).

He had no inclination for satirical subjects; perhaps he could not view that which was legitimate in the way of subject for satirical censure with sufficient equanimity to treat it with mere sarcasm, for he always broke out into passionate reprobation that bordered too much upon anger and loss of temper, when he expressed his indignation about anything.—CYRUS REDDING (“Reminiscences of Thomas Campbell”).¹

*No self-
control.*

The nervous susceptibility of the poet was very great, and excited in a degree unpleasant to himself by slight things. He had great latent pride, and with it, much false reserve. Angry warmth or vio-

¹ Redding (Cyrus). Literary Reminiscences of Thomas Campbell. 2 vols., 12mo. London, 1860.

lence of language in another, rendered him immediately unfit for business or company.—CYRUS REDDING ("Reminiscences of Thomas Campbell").

There was poor Campbell the poet, obtruding his sentimentalities, amidst a quivering apprehension of making himself ridiculous. He darted out of our house, and never came again, because, after warning, he sat down, in a room full of people (all authors, as it happened) on a low chair of my old aunt's which went very easily on castors, and which carried him back to the wall and rebounded, of course making every body laugh. Off went poor Campbell in a huff; and, well as I had long known him, I never saw him again: and I was not very sorry, for his sentimentality was too soft, and his craving for praise too morbid to let him be an agreeable companion.—HARRIET MARTINEAU ("Autobiography").¹

No self-control.

At an evening (after dinner) party the handsomest woman in the room, somewhat frightened by Campbell's manner, made room beside herself for a quieter admirer on the sofa, to his exclusion. The favored individual dreamed of no offence, and was surprised by being desired to take the box-seat of the carriage which happened to go in his and Campbell's direction homewards. Campbell was one of three inside; and when seeking an explanation for being exposed to the cold night air instead of being snug, when there was room enough, he

Childish violence.

¹ Martineau (Harriet). Autobiography. Edited by M. W. Chapman. 2 vols., 8vo. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1877.

*Childish
violence.*

was astonished to be told by his friends that the poet's rage against him was so excited, that he would have assaulted him as sure as they came together.—WILLIAM JERDAN ("Men I have Known").

*Con-
viviality.*

He had never sufficient control over himself, never sufficient command of his intellectual condition and movements, to be sure he might not be tempted, at a moment's warning, to abandon the wide and populous solitude of his little study at Sydenham, or the sweet society of his own "Gertrude of Wyoming," . . . for the boisterous good-fellowship of Tom Hill's after-dinner table, with its anomalous *alla-podrida* of "larking" stock-brokers, laughing punsters, roaring farce-writers, and riotous practical jokers. . . . To sum up this speculation in a word, . . . Tom Campbell was a very good fellow, and a very pleasant one withal; but he prevented Thomas Campbell from being a great poet, though not from doing great things in poetry. P. G. PATMORE ("My Friends and Acquaintance").¹

*Discursive-
ness.*

It was unfortunate that his habits of study were not long fixed upon any subject, but were discursive, and were not directed to carry out a single object to the end. In the course of investigation upon one topic, some incident would intervene which tempted him to a different pursuit for a time, and such an inclination he could not resist.

¹ Patmore (Peter George). My Friends and Acquaintance. 3 vols., 8vo. London, 1854.

—CYRUS REDDING ("Reminiscences of Thomas Campbell").

When excited by his feelings, he was so easily affected by even a small quantity of wine, that both at private tables and public gatherings he laid himself open to the ridiculous suspicion of imbecility, or the graver imputation of habitual drunkenness. The latter was as unfounded a charge as the former; innocent causes, mental and physical, produced the appearances which misled casual observers. Those who intimately knew Campbell understood this.—
WILLIAM JERDAN ("Men I have Known").

*Easily
affected by
wine.*

Among the outline portraits of literary men, published in *Fraser's Magazine*, and republished by Chatto & Windus in 1873, as "The MacIise Portrait Gallery," there is a sketch of Campbell, which represents him as sitting at his ease, drawing consolation from a long churchwarden pipe. As this was published during Campbell's life, it furnishes pretty good evidence that he was a smoker.

*Probably a
smoker.*

Campbell was an excellent host for a small and well-assorted literary dinner-party. He combined all the qualities proper to that difficult office, without a single counteracting one; the highest intellectual position and pretensions, without the smallest disposition to make them apparent—much less to placard them; a ready wit and a fine turn for social humor, without the slightest touch of that vulgar *waggery* which so often accompanies and neutralizes these; . . . a graceful, easy, and

A good host.

A good host.

well-bred manner and bearing; . . . finally a perpetual consciousness of his position and duties as master of the house, yet an entire apparent forgetfulness of these in the pleasure he took in the presence of his friends.—P. G. PATMORE (“My Friends and Acquaintance”).

An inhospitable act.

Social intercourse with Campbell must have been a matter of considerable peril. Cyrus Redding tells a story which gives one a very unpleasant impression of the poet's hospitality. At a dinner party, at his own house, Campbell made his friend Redding believe that a distinguished doctor of the English Church was a member of the Scottish Kirk. Thereupon Redding indulged in criticism and abuse of the English Church and clergy, until he fairly drove the Churchman from the room, when, he says, “Campbell could contain no longer. He stated to all present that Dr. Strachan was of the Church of England, archdeacon of Toronto, in Canada, a very good man, and an old friend of his. ‘You have done your own business now,’ said Campbell to me.” This outrage upon two of his friends evidently gave him much pleasure, for Redding says that he frequently alluded to it in their subsequent intercourse.

Literary fastidiousness.

He labored much at what he wrote, poetry or prose, and I have known him to produce but a single page of prose as the result of a day. I remember once expressing my surprise at this, and his telling me he always considered a verse as the ample fruitage of a week; for although the rough

hewing of a block might be the work of an hour, the fashioning and polishing were born of the toil that brought reward.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

Literary fastidiousness.

I remember his contributing a short poem to the Burns' Festival, in London, and returning from Sydenham to town to alter a "which" into a "that," or *vice versa*, in the printer's proof. Perhaps the MS. was quite right, but assuredly he could not rest till he was certain of having given the last touch to whatever he did in poetry.—WILLIAM JERDAN ("Men I have Known").

Campbell wrote with great slowness, and when he had completed his work, and was still displeased with what he had done, would rewrite the whole. . . . In his later life, when he had lost much of that self-respect which once ruled his transactions with booksellers, and had come to lend his name, or put together works not at all contributing to his reputation, during the last eight or nine years of his life, he was no longer ruled by his old solicitude.—CYRUS REDDING ("Reminiscences of Thomas Campbell").

A slow worker.

P. G. Patmore, in his book, "My Friends and Acquaintance," says that "The Life of Mrs. Siddons, by Thomas Campbell, Esq.," and "The Life of Sir Thomas Lawrence, by Thomas Campbell, Esq.," were really prepared and composed by a literary hack, whose name he does not give; Campbell's only share in the work being to look over the manuscript, revise the proofs, and permit his name to be placed

A dubious accusation.

*A dubious
accusation.*

on the title-page. Mr. Patmore says : " The uninitiated reader must not suppose that I am disclosing any private secrets in this case. One of the modes in which Campbell reconciled (both to himself and others) this necessity of his literary and social position, was by making no mystery of the case, or caring that others should do so. ' So far as the reading public is concerned,' he argued, ' all that my name does to these works is, to stand sponsor for their facts, dates, and so forth ; and for those I think I can safely depend on —. For the rest, I am too poor to stand upon the critical niceties of literary casuistry. Besides, those who are fools enough to suppose that I *could* write such loose, disjointed, shambling stuff as those books are for the most part composed of, are not worth caring about. And the rest of the world will learn the truth, somehow or other, soon enough for the safety of my *partial* reputation, which is the only one I ever aimed at.' "

Cyrus Redding, who was intimate with Campbell, and in habits of daily intercourse with him, states many facts which render it difficult to believe Mr. Patmore's account of this matter. He relates, very circumstantially, Campbell's anxiety about the memoir of Mrs. Siddons ; his accepting the task at Mrs. S.'s request ; his search for letters and other documents ; his shutting himself up in his room, and putting a card upon his door, stating how he was employed, together with other details which considerably discredit Mr. Patmore's story.

Campbell had commenced his duties as editor of the *New Monthly* on the 1st of January, 1821. It

was with many misgivings the poet undertook the task, for which he was singularly disqualified. "He was accustomed to make mountains of molehills;" he had no organ of order; contributions were rarely acknowledged, and not often read; of the capabilities of contemporary writers he was entirely ignorant. He could seldom make up his mind either to accept or reject an article, and fancied he must be held responsible not only for the sentiments, but for the language of every contributor. Especially he was disqualified for his task by his extreme sensitiveness. He could not bear reproach or blame; complaint more than exasperated him; he took as a personal insult any protest against his editorial fiat.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

As an editor.

Among the poet's peculiarities to others, was his carelessness about their letters or articles which chanced to fall into his hands. . . . Campbell read the notes he received, but if requiring an answer, he set about the task unwillingly, and dismissed it with a brief reply. . . . He was continually losing letters or papers, and then fretting about their recovery. He would read a letter and put it into his coat-pocket, intending to reply to it, and forget all about the matter. . . . He had no method, no arrangement, his papers lay about in confusion, and if he wanted for a moment to put them aside, he would jumble them into a heap, or cram them into a drawer.—CYRUS REDDING ("Reminiscences of Thomas Campbell").

Correspondence.

I think it was the time he last came up from Scot-

*Careless-
ness.*

land that I crossed him in the street just as he was entering his own house, wearied and dusty. I went in with him for a few minutes, when putting his hand into all his pockets, he exclaimed, "I have not lost them, surely ; I had a hundred pounds and more just now." He searched, but searched in vain, coat, pockets, and all. . . . I found he had brought the notes loose in his pocket, such was his careless way. . . . He soon forgot in the present case the loss of his money, economist as he affected at times to be.—CYRUS REDDING ("Reminiscences of Thomas Campbell").

*An unlucky
choice.*

His friend Williams complained to me bitterly of his accepting an arbitration in a matter of some consequence, making him, with great pains, well acquainted with all the circumstances, and then, not being able to get him to attend more than once or twice, and at the second meeting forgetting all that had taken place about the affair, and the state of the question altogether. Williams did not know the poet as well as I did, or he was the last man he would have selected as an arbitrator—one thing continually pushing that which preceded it quite out of the poet's head.—CYRUS REDDING ("Reminiscences of Thomas Campbell").

*Absent-
mindedness.*

As an instance of his absence of mind, it is stated that posting off to Brighton to visit Horace Smith, and to spend a few days with the family he dearly loved, he suddenly discovered he had left all his money on his table at his lodgings, and posted back to town to get it.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

His brain was frequently wool-gathering, of which I can afford an instance. . . . Tom accepted an invitation to dine with a friend in the country, who had just hired a villa for the summer months, half a dozen miles from town. The address was communicated verbally, "near the *Green Man*, at *Dulwich*," which Campbell declared he could not forget. Owing to some confusion, however, he proceeded on the following Sunday and made his way to *Greenwich*, where he set about inquiring, in vain, for the sign of the *Dull Man*. It was suggested that he might mean the *Green Man* at *Blackheath*, but here he was equally at fault, and the *Black Boy* somewhere near got into his head and was next tried. At length the proper direction flashed upon the tired poet; but it was now long past the dinner hour, he was far from the place, and he sat down to his solitary chop at the nearest inn.—WILLIAM JERDAN ("Autobiography").

Wool-gathering.

As a corollary from that want of repose which marked Campbell's intellectual character, there was a total absence in him of that passion for the beauties of external nature, and that consequent love of a country life, which have marked almost all great poets. His mind was of the true metropolitan order.—P. G. PATMORE ("My Friends and Acquaintance").

Indifference to nature.

We shortly sallied out. Mr. Campbell was rather nervous, and hesitated at the street crossings. I said the noise of London was intolerable, but that long usage must reconcile people to it. "Never with

Nervousness in town.

*Nervous-
ness in
London.*

some," said he : " I have been used to it for nearly forty years, and am not yet reconciled to it." He certainly seemed uneasy when within the full sound of the great Babel and her interminable roar.—ANON. (*Chambers's Journal*, February, 1845).

Unmusical.

Of music Mr. Campbell had not the slightest idea. . . . His utmost taste for music amounted to a reminiscence of some jig tune, or some local ballad ; and in the latter I observed that he dwelt on the words more than the tune.—ANON. (*New Monthly Magazine*, 1845).

Politics.

In politics, Mr. Campbell was very much inclined to American republicanism, and was about what we now call a radical, but he never would acknowledge that he was any thing else than a Whig of the school of the illustrious Charles James Fox.—ANON. (*New Monthly Magazine*, 1845).

Campbell was a keen politician and a thorough Whig of the school of Charles James Fox, and a Free Trader of the school of Richard Cobden.—CHARLES MACKAY ("Recollections").¹

Campbell was . . . a thorough republican at heart ; and not the less so for many of his other qualities, both personal and intellectual, being more or less moulded and colored by the aristocratic principle, and some of them being the very quin-

¹ Mackay (Charles). *Forty Years' Recollections*. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1877.

tessence of that principle.—P. G. PATMORE ("My Friends and Acquaintance").

Campbell's interest in the cause of Poland is well known. His devotion to it was a passion that had all the fervor of patriotism, the purity of philanthropy, the fidelity of a genuine love of liberty. I was with him on the day he received an account of the fall of Warsaw. Never in my life did I see a man so stricken with profound sorrow! He looked utterly woe-begone; his features were haggard, his eyes sunken, his lips pale, his color almost yellow. . . . If I had been told that any man could have been similarly affected by the news of any political event, or catastrophe, I could not have believed it. It was not regret, deep concern, or mere melancholy, at tidings of a distressing public nature, but real heart-felt sorrow, stupefying grief, . . . for the loss of a beloved object. . . . That beloved object was Poland. It was his idol. He wrote for it—he worked for it—he sold his literary labor for it; he used his influence with all persons of eminence in political life, of his acquaintance, in favor of it; and, when it was lost, in favor of those brave defenders of it who had survived its fall.—R. H. MADDEN (quoted in Beattie's "Life of Campbell").¹

*Devotion to
Poland.*

Mr. Campbell's manner of doing kindnesses was very delicate. . . . When he was in the spacious chambers in St. James's, he always had a very

*Kindness to
the Poles.*

¹ Beattie (William, M.D.). Life and Letters of Thomas Campbell. 3 vols., 8vo. London, 1849.

*Kindness to
the Poles.*

sumptuously laid out breakfast-table for the reception of the unfortunate Poles. These brave exiles certainly evinced very strong appetites, and I trust that good digestion waited on those appetites, but Campbell knew that very many of these victims of Russian tyranny, though titled and affluent in their native country, were very nearly starving in this, and that his breakfast was the only meal that many of them would get through the day. After this breakfast, he would have a plate or plates of sandwiches, sometimes folded in paper by the servants, and at others by himself, and he would press his guests to put a paper into the pocket, on the ground that they knew not how cold and raw the English climate was, and that he and other Englishmen provided themselves with such things when about to take much exercise, especially in the neighborhood of London.—ANON. (*New Monthly Magazine*, 1845).

*Snow-ball-
ing with the
students.*

When he reached the college-green¹ . . . the snow lay on the ground, and he found the youths pelting each other with snow-balls. That he was just going to deliver a solemn address to the same youths never for a moment crossed his mind. . . . The feeling of his youth came upon him, . . . he rushed into the *mêlée*, and joined in the frolic in his fiftieth year, as if he had been but fifteen. He flung about his snow-balls with no inconsiderable dexterity. . . . Then, when the moment for

¹ On his way to deliver his inaugural address as Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow.

delivering the address was come, the students being summoned, and he proceeding in the van, they entered the hall together. . . . There could not be a better picture of the temperament and character of the man, than such an incident, so impulsive and lively, at a moment when gravity was on every other adult visage.—CYRUS REDDING ("Reminiscences of Thomas Campbell").

Snow-balling with the students.

One day he was so smitten by a beautiful child in St. James's Park, that he put an advertisement in the newspapers¹ (with a description) to discover its residence, the result of which was excessively ludicrous. For some wags of the Hook & Co. clique, aware of the circumstances (which the idealizing bard had blabbed), answered the appeal, and not knowing what address to give, took the last name in the directory, a Z——, No. —, Sloane Street. Hither Campbell hurried the next forenoon, in full dress, and was shown up to the drawing-room, where he found a middle-aged lady waiting to learn his errand. It was not long in being explained, and the indignant Miss Z——, on being asked to bring in her lovely offspring to gratify the longings of the

An amiable freak.

¹ The advertisement, published on April 19, 1841, was as follows:—"A gentleman, sixty-three years old, who on Saturday last, between six and seven P.M., met near Buckingham Gate, with a most interesting-looking child, but who forbore, from respect for the lady who had her in hand, to ask the girl's name and abode, will be gratefully obliged to those who have the happiness of possessing the child, to be informed where she lives, and if he may be allowed to see her again. A letter will reach the advertiser, T. C., at No. 61, Lincoln's-inn-Fields."

poet, rushed to the bell and rang violently for her servant to show the insolent stranger to the door.—
WILLIAM JERDAN ("Men I have Known").

"A French
Virgil."

When I first saw this eminent person, he gave me the idea of a French Virgil. . . . He seemed to me to embody a Frenchman's ideal notion of the Latin poet ; something a little more cut and dry than I had looked for ; compact and elegant, critical and acute, with a consciousness of authorship upon him ; a taste over-anxious not to commit itself, and refining and diminishing nature as in a drawing-room mirror. This fancy was strengthened in the course of conversation, by his expatiating on the greatness of Racine. . . . His face and person were rather on a small scale ; his features regular ; his eye lively and penetrating ; and when he spoke, dimples played about his mouth ; which, nevertheless, had something restrained and close in it.
—LEIGH HUNT ("Autobiography").

REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D.

1780-1847.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

PERHAPS Dr. Chalmers is out of place in this volume. He certainly possessed literary ability of a high order, yet it was not as a writer, but as an orator and a social reformer that he was chiefly distinguished ; and therefore it may be somewhat illogical to include his name in the present work. My excuse for turning a little aside from the general principle of selection is, that it seemed better to make some sacrifice of strict consistency, rather than to exclude the great Scotchman from this group of his countrymen, and to lose the charm of his hearty nature and unconventional character.

The large, benignant simplicity of the man is what first and most deeply impresses one. Not the simplicity of the recluse, a selfish compound of quiescence and indifference ; for his nature was broadly social, and his life was spent in ceaseless and widely varied labors for the well-being of others. Chalmers was a peaceful man, but his peace was the assured peace of conscious power, and beneath all his serenity there beat a fiery heart, capable of noble wrath and heroic action.

In 1803, when Great Britain was threatened with

invasion, the young minister spoke these words in his pulpit at Kilmaay :—" May that day when Bonaparte ascends the throne of Britain be the last of my existence ; may I be the first to ascend the scaffold he erects to extinguish the worth and spirit of the country ; may my blood mingle with the blood of patriots ; and may I die at the foot of that altar on which British independence is to be the victim." Soon afterward he joined a volunteer corps, not only as chaplain but also as lieutenant, and there is a story of his having once entered the pulpit clad in a uniform, the brilliancy of which was quite concealed by the sober ecclesiastic gown ; but as the preacher warmed to his work, and became more free and energetic in action, the gown could no longer fulfil its unwonted office, and through the folds of black appeared glimpses of unclerical scarlet and gold. So it was throughout his long career ; the martial spirit flashing forth, gleaming brightly, amid the mild and tranquil habitudes of that gracious life.

The life of Chalmers was written by his son-in-law, the Rev. William Hanna, and this is the principal authority. There is also a good biography of him by James Dodds. The following works may also be consulted :—Dr. John Brown's "*Horæ Subsecivæ*" (republished in this country as "*Spare Hours*"); Lockhart's "*Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*;" R. P. Gillies's "*Memoirs of a Literary Veteran*;" and the "*Journal*" and "*Memorials*" of Lord Cockburn.

LEADING EVENTS OF CHALMERS'S LIFE.

- 1780.— Born, March 17th, at Anstruther, in the County of Fife.
- 1791.—(Aged 11.) Enters St. Andrew's University.
- 1799.—(Aged 19.) Licensed to preach.
- 1803.—(Aged 23.) Ordained as minister of Kilmany.
- 1805.—(Aged 25.) Chaplain and lieutenant of a volunteer corps.
- 1812.—(Aged 32.) Marries Miss Grace Pratt.
- 1815.—(Aged 35.) Minister of the Tron Church, Glasgow.
- 1817.—(Aged 37.) Publishes "Astronomical Discourses."
- 1823.—(Aged 43.) Professor of Moral Philosophy in St. Andrew's University.
- 1828.—(Aged 48.) Professor of Theology in Edinburgh University.
- 1843.—(Aged 63.) Withdraws from the national church, and becomes the leader of the Free Church.
- 1847.—(Aged 67 years and 2 months.) Dies, May 30th.

REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D.

BY those of his school-fellows, few now in number, who survive, Dr. Chalmers is remembered as one of the idlest, strongest, merriest, and most generous-hearted boys in Anstruther school. Little time or attention would have been required from him to prepare his daily lessons, so as to meet the ordinary demands of the school-room ; for when he did set himself to learn, not one of all his school-fellows could do it at once so quickly and so well. When the time came, however, for saying them, the lessons were often found scarcely half-learned, and sometimes not learned at all. . . . Joyous, vigorous, and humorous, he took his part in all the games of the playground, ever ready to lead or to follow, when school-boy expeditions were planned and executed ; and wherever, for fun or for frolic, any little group of the merry-hearted was gathered, his full, rich laugh might be heard rising amid their shouts of glee.—WILLIAM HANNA (“Memoir of Chalmers”).¹

School-days.

Another of our occasional guests, during the win-

¹ Hanna (Rev. William). *Memoirs of the Rev. Thomas Chalmers, D.D.* 4 vols., 8vo. Edinburgh, 1852.

In youth.

ter of 1806, was a young student from the University of St. Andrews, named Thomas Chalmers, who, I believe, had not then assumed the title of reverend, nor even dreamed of being dubbed Doctor of Divinity. In truth I think no one could then have rationally predicted in what particular path of life a spirit so energetic and yet so versatile would at last determine to move. . . . Retaining the broadest Scotch accent, he spoke with rapidity and fervor on subjects numberless and completely incongruous. Considering his force and calibre, he might indeed have seemed born to grapple with all pursuits and all sciences; . . . he entered with equal zest into all studies, theological, poetical, political, metaphysical, and mathematical. Apparently there were no obstacles too great for him. Difficulties could not weigh him down, because he was *au dessus de tout cela*; he could look down upon the difficulties, and he trampled on them; yet no one could say that this was the effect of arrogance. On the contrary, the consideration of his subject, or object, whatsoever it might be, was paramount; it absorbed his attention; he was not disturbed by the morbid sensibility and idiosyncrasies of genius, and the consideration of *self* disappeared utterly.—R. P. GILLIES ("Memoirs of a Literary Veteran").

*Appearance
and
manner.*

There was no separating his thoughts and expressions from his person, and looks, and voice. How perfectly we can at this moment recall him! Thundering, flaming, lightening in the pulpit; teaching, indoctrinating, drawing after him his students in his lecture-room; sitting among other public men,

*Appearance
and
manner.*

the most unconscious, the most king-like of them all, with that broad leonine countenance, that beaming, liberal smile ; or on the way out to his home, in his old-fashioned great-coat, with his throat muffled up, his big walking-stick moved outward in an arc, its point fixed, its head circumferential, a sort of companion, and playmate, with which doubtless, he demolished legions of imaginary foes, errors, and stupidities in men and things, in Church and State. His great look, large chest, large head, his amplitude every way ; his broad, simple, child-like, inturned feet ; his short, hurried, impatient step ; his erect, royal air ; his look of general goodwill ; his kindling up into a warm but vague benignity when one he did not recognize spoke to him ; the addition, for it was not a change, of keen specialty, to his hearty recognition ; the twinkle of his eyes ; the immediately saying something very personal to set all to rights, and then the sending you off with some thought, some feeling, some remembrance, making your heart burn within you ; his voice indescribable ; his eye—that most peculiar feature—not vacant, but *asleep*—innocent, mild, and large ; and his soul, its great inhabitant, not always at his window ; but then, when he did awake, how close to you was that burning, vehement soul ! how it penetrated and overcame you ! how mild, and affectionate, and genial its expression at his own fireside !—DR. JOHN BROWN (“*Horæ Subsecivæ*,” vol. 2).¹

¹ Brown (John, M.D.). *Horæ Subsecivæ*. 2 vols., 12mo. Edinburgh, 1858–61. (Reprinted in Boston as “Spare Hours,” 1866.)

*Personal
appearance.*

At first sight, no doubt, his face is a coarse one—but a mysterious kind of meaning breathes from every part of it, that such as have eyes to see, cannot be long without discovering. It is very pale, and the large, half-closed eye-lids have a certain drooping, melancholy weight about them, which interested me very much. . . . The lips, too, are singularly pensive in their mode of falling down at the sides, although there is no want of richness and vigor in their central fulness of curve. The upper lip, from the nose downwards, is separated by a very deep line, which gives a sort of leonine firmness of expression to all the lower part of the face. The cheeks are square and strong, in texture like pieces of marble, with the cheek-bones very broad and prominent. The eyes themselves are light in color, and have a strange, dreamy heaviness, that conveys any idea rather than that of dulness, but which contrasts in a wonderful manner, with the dazzling, watery glare they exhibit when expanded in their sockets, and illuminated with all their flame and fervor, in some moment of high entranced enthusiasm.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk," 1819).

He is rather inattentive to his dress and person, and has much of the abstractedness, which generally goes to the credit of genius. He wears a deep-crowned hat, drawn so much over his eyes, as to disfigure him. He is above all the little arts, by which some men attempt to build greatness upon personal dignity, or gracefulness of manners. . . . I have been told by one of his friends, that having

left his house, at a very early hour, one morning, with a bundle under his arm, to take his departure for some neighboring place, in a steamboat, he was arrested by one of the city watch, who did not know him, and who insisted upon conveying him to the watch-house. Dr. C., impatient to be interrupted, told the man who he was. "Na, na," said the guard of the police, "you're no Dr. Chalmers; he's not such a man as you; and he'd not be seen strolling at this hour." To the watch-house therefore he went, where he was immediately recognized, and set at liberty.—JOHN GRISCOM ("A Year in Europe").¹

*Personal
appearance.*

He is of low stature, and square built, with a full, but by no means corpulent person. His head is very large, though not disproportionably so. Features, regular and commanding; a high, uncommonly broad, retreating forehead; even and strongly marked brows; eyes, though dimmed by study, yet mildly intellectual; a straight, though prominent nose; a well-defined and proportioned mouth.—E. D. GRIFFIN ("Remains").

He is of the middle height, thick set and brawny, but not corpulent. His face is rather broad, with high cheek-bones, pale, and, as it were, careworn, but well-formed and expressive. His eyes are of a leaden color, rather dull when in a state of repose, but flashing with a half-smothered fire when fairly roused. His nose is broad and lion-like, his mouth,

¹ Griscom (John). A Year in Europe, 1818-19. 2 vols., 12mo. New York, 1823.

*Personal
appearance.*

one of the most expressive parts of his countenance, firm, a little compressed and stern, indicating courage and energy, while his forehead is ample and high, . . . covered with straggling grey hair.—ROBERT TURNBULL ("Genius of Scotland").¹

He is awkward, and has a low, rough, husky voice, a guttural articulation, a whitish eye, and a large dingy countenance. In point of mere feature, it would not be difficult to think him ugly. But he is saved from this, and made interesting and lovable, by singular modesty, kindness, and simplicity of manner, a strong expression of calm thought and benevolence, a forehead so broad that it seems to proclaim itself the seat of a great intellect, a love of humor, and an indescribable look of drollery when any thing ludicrous comes over him.—LORD COCKBURN ("Memorials of his Time").

In point of physique, Chalmers fell short of my expectation. Truly impressive as his character was, when known, from its moral elevation and godly sincerity, he was deficient in dignity, and of homely aspect. In height and breadth, and in general configuration, he was not unlike Samuel Taylor Coleridge. I have, since I knew Coleridge, sometimes thought, that if Chalmers's head had been hidden from sight, I could easily have mistaken him for that remarkable man. His face was pallid and pasty; and, I rather think, showed slight traces of small-pox. His features were ordinary; his hair was

¹ Turnbull (Robert). *The Genius of Scotland*. 12mo. New York, 1847.

scanty, and generally roughed, as if his fingers had been often passed through it ; his brow was not high, but very broad and well developed. . . .

*Personal
appearance.*

There was one feature in his face which struck me as so very peculiar, and, I may say, anomalous, that I have often wondered never to have heard or read any comment upon it from others ; I allude to his eye. The eye, by its mobility, its power of expressing the passions, and the spirit it imparts to the "features," is usually considered as the index of the mind. Now, I never beheld so mute, impassive, inexpressive an eye as Chalmers's. It was small, cold, gray, and fishy. When, either in preaching from the pulpit or lecturing in the class-room, he was excited by his subject ; when his heart grew hot within him, and the fire burned ; when the brilliancy of his imagery and the power of his phraseology carried the feelings of his auditory away with all the impetuosity of a torrent ; nay, when he seemed transported out of himself by the sublimity of his conceptions, and the intense reality of his convictions, so as to cause him to defy conventionalities, and set at nought the artifices of rhetoric, and make him swing his left arm about like the sails of a windmill ; when every fibre of his body throbbed and quivered with emotion ; when his listeners' mouths were wide open, and their breath suspended, the cheeks of some bedewed with tears, and the eyes of others scintillating with sympathy and admiration—his eye remained as tame and lustreless as if it had been but the pale reflex of a mind indifferent and half asleep !—J. C. YOUNG ("Memoir of C. M. Young").

*Conversa-
tion.*

He often became extremely animated—sometimes even vehement—though conversing with only a single individual. This was especially the case when his mind was occupied with any great question in which he had been led to take a prominent part. He might begin calmly, but, as he spoke, “the fire burned,” and a torrent of glowing eloquence soon came rushing from his lips. I have heard him at a fireside, in the recess of a window, and even while sitting up in bed, break forth in a style of stormy grandeur sufficient to electrify a whole assembly. A scene which took place in my own study is worthy of being recorded. He called one day with Isaac Taylor. . . . It was at a time when the Church Extension cause had materially suffered from what Dr. Chalmers regarded as the unscrupulous conduct of men in power; and on this subject he broke forth, not, as he himself would have expressed it, with the vehemence of passion, but with the vehemence of sentiment. His face kindled up, his eye flashed, the tone of his voice became impetuous, and his whole bearing afforded unmistakable indications of the strength of the emotions that were at work within. When he began, he was seated about two yards off from Mr. Taylor, but with almost every sentence that he uttered he gave his chair a hitch nearer, until the knees of the two were in very close proximity, and Mr. Taylor had to draw himself up and lean back on the wall in order to save his head from the uplifted arm of “the old man eloquent.” In a few minutes the thunder-cloud had passed away, and his bland and genial nature beamed forth again with the sunny serenity

that usually characterized it.—REV. — COUPER (quoted in Hanna's "Memoir of Chalmers").

Chalmers . . . can say a pleasant thing now and then, and laugh when he has said it, and he has a strong touch of humor in his countenance ; but in general he is *grave*, his thoughts grow to a great size before they are uttered. . . . A man might be in Chalmers's company for an hour, especially in a party, without knowing who or what he was, though in the end he would be sure to be detected by some display of powerful originality.—J. G. GURNEY (quoted in Dodds's "Biographical Study of Chalmers").¹

*Conversa-
tion.*

As his invariable mode of dealing with introductions was to invite the introduced to breakfast, very interesting groups often gathered round his breakfast table. In the general conversation of promiscuous society, Dr. Chalmers did not excel ; . . . there are minor graces of conversation required for its easy guidance through varied and fluctuating channels, which his absorption with his own topics, and the massive abruptness of his movements, made it difficult, perhaps impossible, for him to practise. But at his breakfast table, with half a dozen strangers or foreigners around him, his conversation was in the highest degree rich and attractive.—WILLIAM HANNA ("Memoir of Chalmers").

His private manners and conversation are, I as-

¹ Dodds (James). Thomas Chalmers : A Biographical Study. 12mo. Edinburgh, 1870.

*Conversa-
tion.*

sure you, quite as admirable as his eloquence in the pulpit. He is, without any exception, the most perfectly modest man I ever met with—the most averse to all kind of display—the most simply and unaffectedly kind good man. Yet he is one of the most original men in conversation I have ever had the fortune to meet with—and I think throws out more new ideas, in the course of a few plain sentences, apparently delivered without the smallest consciousness that they embody any thing particularly worthy of attention, than any one of all the great men I have become acquainted with since I came to Scotland.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk," 1819).

*Character
of his
oratory.*

He was an orator in its specific and highest sense. We need not prove this to those who have heard him ; we cannot to those who have not. It was a living man sending living, burning words into the minds and hearts of men before him, radiating his intense fervor upon them all ; but there was no reproducing the entire effect when alone and cool ; some one of the elements was gone. We say nothing upon this part of his character, because upon this all are agreed. His eloquence rose like a tide, a sea, setting in, bearing down upon you, lifting up all its waves—"deep calling unto deep ;" there was no doing anything but giving yourself up for the time to its will.—DR. JOHN BROWN ("Horæ Subsecivæ").

His voice is neither strong nor melodious. His gestures are neither easy nor graceful ; but, on the

contrary, extremely rude and awkward—his pronunciation is not only broadly national, but broadly provincial—distorting almost every word he utters into some barbarous novelty, which, had his hearers leisure to think of such things, might be productive of an effect at once ludicrous and offensive in a singular degree.

*Character
of his
oratory.*

But of a truth, these are things which no listener can attend to while this great preacher stands before him, armed with all the weapons of the most commanding eloquence, and swaying all around him with its imperial rule. At first, indeed, there is nothing to make one suspect what riches are in store. He commences in a low, drawling key, which has not even the merit of being solemn—and advances from sentence to sentence, and from paragraph to paragraph, while you seek in vain to catch a single echo that gives promise of that which is to come. There is, on the contrary, an appearance of constraint about him, that affects and distresses you—you are afraid that his breast is weak, and that even the slight exertion he makes may be too much for it. But then with what tenfold richness does this dim preliminary curtain make the glories of his eloquence to shine forth, when the heated spirit at length shakes from it its chill confining fetters, and bursts out elate and rejoicing in the full splendor of its disimprisoned wings.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk," 1819).

Not very familiar with the Scotch brogue which Chalmers spoke, of the rudest Glasgow kind, and finding it not only difficult to understand but pain-

*Character
of his
oratory.*

ful to listen to, I was little disposed, at first, to give much heed to his sermon. His appearance and manner in the pulpit, moreover, were by no means attractive. His face and features were coarse and large; his lank gray hair fell carelessly about a narrow forehead, and he kept his head bent, and his blinking eyes close to his manuscript; while his only action was an up and down or sawing movement with his right arm, from the elbow. In spite of all these personal disadvantages, which, at the beginning, were very repulsive to me, I was soon so interested in his fervid utterances, and absorbed by the quick alternations of emotion with which my feelings responded to his earnest appeals, that I unresistingly yielded to the torrent of his eloquence. The man, in the mean time, seemed transfigured, and my tearful eyes saw, as it were through a sacred halo, the prophet or apostle.—ROBERT TOMES ("My College Days").¹

He seldom utters an extemporaneous word. His habit is to have every thing written, to the very letter. The success of the very few attempts at unprepared speaking which he has ever been obliged to make removes all doubt of his power, if he had chosen to practise it. But it is not his way. He feels stronger in building up beforehand, and giving the public the mere recitation.—LORD COCKBURN ("Memorials of his Time").

We remember well our first hearing Dr. Chalmers.

¹ Tomes (Robert). *My College Days*. 12mo. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1880.

We were in a moorland district in Tweeddale, rejoicing in the country, after nine months of the High School. We heard that the famous preacher was to be at a neighboring parish church, and off we set, a cartful of irrepressible youngsters. "Calm was all nature as a resting wheel." The crows, instead of making wing, were impudent and sat still; the cart-horses were standing, knowing the day, at the field-gates, gossiping and gazing, idle and happy; the moor was stretching away in the pale sunlight—vast, dim, melancholy, like a sea; everywhere were to be seen the gathering people, "sprinklings of blithe company;" the country-side seemed moving to one centre. As we entered the kirk we saw a notorious character, a drover, who had much of the brutal look of what he worked in, with the knowing eye of a man of the city, a sort of big Peter Bell—

A great sermon.

"He had a hardness in his eye,
He had a hardness in his cheek."

He was our terror, and we not only wondered, but were afraid when we saw *him* going in. The kirk was full as it could hold. How different in looks to a brisk town congregation! There was a fine leisureliness and vague stare; all the dignity and vacancy of animals; eyebrows raised and mouths open, as is the habit with those who speak little and look much, and at far-off objects. The minister comes in, homely in his dress and gait, but having a great look about him, like a mountain among hills. The High School boys thought him like a "big one of ourselves;" he looks vaguely round upon his audience, as if he saw in it *one great object, not many.*

*A great
sermon.*

We shall never forget his smile ! its general benignity ;—how he let the light of his countenance fall on us ! He read a few verses quietly ; then prayed briefly, solemnly, with his eyes wide open all the time, but not seeing. Then he gave out his text ; we forgot it, but its subject was, “ Death reigns.” He stated slowly, calmly, the simple meaning of the words ; what death was, and how and why it reigned ; then suddenly he started, and looked like a man who had seen some great sight, and was breathless to declare it ; he told us how death reigned—everywhere, at all times, in all places ; how we all knew it, how we would yet know more of it. The drover, who had sat down in the table-seat opposite, was gazing up in a state of stupid excitement ; he seemed restless, but never kept his eye from the speaker. The tide set in—every thing added to its power, deep called to deep, imagery and illustration poured in ; and every now and then the theme,—the simple, terrible statement, was repeated in some lucid interval. After overwhelming us with proofs of the reign of Death, and transferring to us his intense urgency and emotion ; and after shrieking, as if in despair, these words, “ Death is a tremendous necessity,”—he suddenly looked beyond us as if into some distant region, and cried out, “ Behold a mightier !—who is this ? He cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, glorious in his apparel, speaking in righteousness, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save.” Then, in a few plain sentences, he stated the truth as to sin entering, and death by sin, and death passing upon all. Then he took fire once more, and enforced, with re-

A great sermon.

doubled energy and richness, the freeness, the simplicity, the security, the sufficiency of the great method of justification. How astonished and impressed we all were ! He was at the full thunder of his power ; the whole man was in an agony of earnestness. The drover was weeping like a child, the tears running down his ruddy, coarse cheeks—his face opened out and smoothed like an infant's ; his whole body stirred with emotion. We all had insensibly been drawn out of our seats, and were converging towards the wonderful speaker. And when he sat down, after warning each one of us to remember who it was, and what it was, that followed Death on his pale horse, and how alone we could escape—we all sunk back into our seats. How beautiful in our eyes did the thunderer look—exhausted—but sweet and pure ! How he poured out his soul before his God in giving thanks for sending the Abolisher of Death ! Then, a short psalm, and all was ended.—DR. JOHN BROWN ("Horæ Subsecivæ").

In his classroom.

It was interesting to observe the never-failing attention of his class. From the commencement to the close of his lecture they maintained a breathless silence ; during his more impassioned flights of oratory they eagerly bent forward, and sometimes those that were in the back rows stood up. On one remarkable occasion, when he was powerfully demonstrating the impossibility of order arising out of chaos without the agency of an intelligent Creator, I observed that by degrees, not merely the front rows, but nearly the whole class had risen. I am not sure that I was not myself among those who

instinctively gave this evidence of excitement.—JOHN SINCLAIR (“Sketches of Old Times and Distant Places”).

*A hard
worker.*

Many have been under the impression that Dr. Chalmers was more a man of powerful impulses, who achieved wonderful things by fits and starts of burning zeal, than of systematic, persevering application of mind. There never was a greater mistake. With all his transcendent genius and talent and philanthropy, I am satisfied that the main secret of his strength lay in his indomitable resolution to master whatever he undertook. What has been considered by some as a defect was indeed an excellence of no common order. When convinced that it was his duty to address himself to some course of study or of action, he concentrated on that his energies of mind and body, and with indefatigable assiduity completed his work, unless some urgent call of duty which did not admit of postponement interfered. Dr. Chalmers devoted at least five hours each day to study. I use the word in its proper sense; he was studiously occupied partly before breakfast, and thereafter till one or two o'clock, in reading or composition. These were his hours, and it was understood that they were . . . not to be invaded by friend or stranger.—REV. — SMYTH (quoted in Hanna's “Memoir of Chalmers”).

The motto, “*Nulla dies sine linea*,” never met with a more rigorous fulfillment. The period allotted to what he called “severe composition” had never

*Methods of
work.*

(if we except his first winter at Saint Andrew's) exceeded two or three hours at a time, and in ordinary circumstances there was seldom more than one sitting daily at such work. The tension of the mind during such effort was extreme, but it was never so long continued as to induce fatigue or exhaustion. During the last six or seven years of his life, his daily modicum of original composition was completed before breakfast, written in short-hand, and all done in bed. The preparatory ruminating . . . process was slow, but it was complete. He often gave it as the reason why he did not and could not take part in the ordinary debates of the General Assembly, that he had not the faculty . . . of thinking extempore. . . . "I have often fancied," he once said, "that in one respect I resemble Rousseau, who says of himself that his processes of thought were *slow but ardent*." . . . This slow and deliberate habit of thinking gave him a great advantage when the act of composition came to be performed. He never had the double task to do, at once of thinking what he should say, and how he should say it. . . . When engaged, therefore, in writing, his whole undivided strength was given to the best and most powerful expression of pre-established ideas. So far before him could he see, and so methodically did he proceed, that he could calculate for weeks and months beforehand, the rate of his progress, and the day when each separate composition would be finished.—WILLIAM HANNA ("Memoir of Chalmers").

He luxuriated among the plants and flowers of

*Habit of
concentration.*

the season, and delighted to examine minutely the structure and the beauties of some humble production that would have escaped the notice of a less practised eye. He said to me one day . . . "I love to dwell on the properties of one flower at a time; to fix my mind on it exclusively until I feel that it has taken complete hold of my mind. This is a peculiarity of my constitution. I must have concentration of thought on any given thing, and not be diverted from it."—REV. — SMYTH (quoted in Hanna's "Memoir of Chalmers").

*Treatment
of boys.*

Dr. Chalmers's . . . visit . . . must have been in . . . 1822, and we all recollect the interest which he showed in conversing with myself, then at Oxford, and with my brother, then quite a boy, on the subject of our respective studies. It was not the manner of a man who condescended to minds far his inferiors, but as if he became one of us, and our studies were as keenly relished by him as if he were himself engaged in them.—COLQUHOUN (quoted in Hanna's "Memoir of Chalmers").

*Intercourse
with his
daughters.*

In his domestic intercourse with his daughters, there was much playful familiarity. Finding one of them sitting alone in a room, he said to her—"Well, my dear little howlet—

‘Hail, mildly pleasing solitude,
Companion of the wise and good ;’

but I'm no for us growing perfectly uncognizant of one another, sitting in corners like sae mony cats." After some of his great public appearances, when

he came home exhausted, his daughters would gather round him as he lay at ease in his arm-chair. One would play Scotch music, another shampoo his feet (a very frequent, and to him a very agreeable operation), a third would talk nonsense, and set him into fits of laughter. At such times, in a mock heroic way, he would repeat Scott's lines, "O, woman, in our hours of ease," etc. A spirit of chivalry ran through all his intercourse with his daughters: they not only ministered to his comfort in the hours of relaxation, he made them companions, as it were, of his public life, and sought their intellectual sympathy with his even highest exercises of thought.—WILLIAM HANNA ("Memoir of Chalmers").

*Intercourse
with his
daughters.*

When he got free from restraint, he had all the gaiety and playfulness of a boy. . . . He had a frame of adamant, that bade defiance to weather, and that actually exulted in the wildness of the blast. Everybody knows what the *east wind* is, in spring or autumn, upon the east coast—fell, and nipping, and gnawing at the heart-strings like a vulture. Most people would rather stand the rack. Yet there are men of strong nerve and tough muscle and Norse vitality, who delight in it. . . . Chalmers was a Norseman. A friend of mine met him one day careering along the sands of St. Andrews whilst the east wind was hissing from the bay. He was without an upper coat, had a great staff in his hand, his chest expanded, and cheeks glowing deep like bronze. Passing in rapid strides, he ejaculated, with that husky, clanging voice of his, like that of a sea-bird, "*Fine bracing east wind this!*"

Hardiness.

—JAMES DODDS ("Biographical Study of Chalmers").

*A pious
fraud.*

He had one morning in the week reserved especially for his students. On meeting with them in his own house, he was often at a loss to recognize them by name, and the mode he took to extricate himself from the difficulty was rather singular. He had a card with the names on it of all the students whom he had that morning invited to breakfast. When all had assembled and were seated, holding the card below the level of the table, as he thought out of sight, he glanced furtively down at it to catch the first name on the list. Then, lifting his eyes and looking eagerly and rapidly around, he would say—"Tea or coffee, Mr. Johnson?" hoping by this innocent artifice to identify the person so addressed, and to save him the pain of being apparently unknown or forgotten. The device was too transparent to be unnoticed; but which of his students did not love him all the more for the kindness which dictated it!—WILLIAM HANNA ("Memoir of Chalmers").

Benignity.

What struck me most in his deportment, was the patriarchal simplicity and parental benignity of character which every thing he did or said so beautifully displayed. You are aware he was the guest of the daughter of one of his oldest and most venerated friends. . . . Surrounded by the family of such a person—surrounded also by several of his old students, now ministers in the neighborhood whom I asked to meet him, the features of his character,

which I have just mentioned, came out in high relief. The genial and kindly interest he took in every one—the delicate attentions he paid to all, even to the youngest child around him—the happy-heartedness he so obviously felt in the prosperity of the young ministers, as he drew them out to state the circumstances in which they were placed, and the modesty and kindliness with which he dropped a word of advice or of encouragement to them, formed altogether one of the loveliest moral pictures I ever beheld. —JOHN PURVES (quoted in Hanna's "Memoir of Chalmers").

Benignity.

"I find," he says, "that successful exertion is a powerful means of exhilaration, which discharges itself in good-humor upon others." His own morning compositions seldom failed in this effect, as he came forth from them beaming and buoyant, with a step springing as that of childhood, and a spirit overflowing with benignity. If his grandson, or any of the younger members of his family were alone in the breakfast-room, a broad and hearty "Hurro! hurro!" ringing through the hall, announced his coming, and carried to them his morning greeting. —WILLIAM HANNA ("Memoir of Chalmers").

Good-humored before breakfast.

Mr. Thomson and Mr. Heggie, an elder and a deacon, went out one evening to Kensington Place, where Dr. Chalmers was living, to speak to him about some parish matters. They found him on the floor busy playing at bowls with his children. "Come away, Mr. Heggie," he exclaimed when they entered, without changing, however his posi-

A game of bowls.

*A game of
bowls.*

tion, "you can tell us how this game ought to be played." Elder and deacon, minister and children, were soon all busy at the game together. "This is not the way," said Mr. Thomson, "we used to play bowls in Galloway." "Come along, then," said Dr. Chalmers, "let us see what the Galloway plan is." And to it they set again with keener relish than ever.—WILLIAM HANNA ("Memoir of Chalmers").

*A child
among
children.*

We well remember long ago loving him before we had seen him—from our having been told, that being out one Saturday at a friend's house near the Pentlands, he collected all the children and small people—the *other* bairns, as he called them—and with no one else of his own growth, took the lead to the nearest hill-top,—how he made each take the biggest and roundest stone he could find, and carry,—how he panted up the hill himself with one of enormous size,—how he kept up their hearts, and made them shout with glee, with the light of his countenance, and with all his pleasant and strange ways and words,—how, having got the breathless little men and women to the top of the hill, he, hot and scant of breath—looked round on the world and upon them with his broad benignant smile—
 . . . how he set off his own huge "fellow,"—how he watched him setting out on his race, slowly, stupidly, vaguely at first, almost as if he might die before he began to live, then suddenly giving a spring and off like a shot—bounding, tearing;
 . . . how the great and good man was *totus in illo*; how he spoke to, upbraided him, cheered him, glo-

ried in him, all but prayed for him,—how he joked philosophy to his wondering and ecstatic crew, when he (the stone) disappeared among some brackens—telling them they had the evidence of their senses that he was in, they might even know he was there by his effects, by the moving brackens, himself unseen; how plain it became that he had gone in, when he actually came out!—how he ran up the opposite side a bit, and then fell back, and lazily expired at the bottom,—how, to their astonishment, but not displeasure—for he “set them off so well,” and “was so funny”—he took from each his cherished stone, and set it off himself! showing them how they all ran alike yet differently; how he went on, “making,” as he said, “an induction of particulars,” till he came to the Benjamin of the flock, a wee wee man, who had brought up a stone bigger than his own head; then how he let him, *unicus omnium*, set off his own, and how wonderfully it ran! what miraculous leaps! what escapes from impossible places! and how it ran up the other side farther than any, and by some felicity remained there.—JOHN BROWN (“*Horæ Subsecivæ*”).

*A child
among
children.*

“I am quite ashamed of myself,” said Dr. Chalmers. “I meet so many people daily in the street, whom we ought to have invited here long ago.” Mrs. Chalmers, to whom these words were addressed, felt that some slight reproach was cast upon her domestic management, as if a larger hospitality should have been exercised. Her quiet but effective method of turning this reproach aside was to keep an accurate list of those who sat down to table

Hospitality.

Hospitality.

during the week or two which followed. This list has unfortunately been lost. It showed that at breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper, on almost every day but Sunday, different relays of guests had been received; and when the gross aggregate was exhibited to Dr. Chalmers he was himself astonished, and confessed that he had no idea that so broad and continuous a stream was passing through his dwelling. The door of that dwelling was indeed thrown quite open, and there were so many waiting to seize the opportunity of personal contact with its admired and honored host, as to create a continued pressure at its entrance.—WILLIAM HANNA ("Memoir of Chalmers").

Love of flowers

Before or after breakfast, Dr. Chalmers would go round the garden lying immediately behind his house, in the progress of which he took great pleasure. "Well, dearie daughtts," he would say, after finishing a round, "it's a noble instrument a garden; I've just counted all the things in flower . . . round all the walks, and they are three hundred and twenty. . . ." He was always the first to bring in the first snow-drop of the season, of which flower he was passionately fond.—WILLIAM HANNA ("Memoir of Chalmers").

Enjoyment of nature.

It was scarcely possible to take even one short walk with him without perceiving that his capacity of enjoyment was singularly large. He could find beauty every where; at least he could single out from the most ordinary scene, some feature or other on which his mind could dwell with interest

and pleasure. All the points from which the scenery of this locality could be viewed to most advantage, he knew most thoroughly; and, however interesting the conversation in which he might be engaged, it was sure to be interrupted when any one of these points was reached. He would pause for a moment, and, with a smile mantling over his countenance, he would give a brief but expressive utterance of his feelings of joy and admiration.—REV. — COUPER (quoted in Hanna's "Memoir of Chalmers").

*Enjoyment
of nature.*

It has been questioned whether, like so many men of genius, who have been masters of the most delicious harmony in their writings, . . . he was really destitute of what is usually termed an *ear* for music. From all that I can learn, he had only an ear for good marked *tunes*. . . . He was present at an evening party, where a very accomplished lady was discoursing most eloquent music from the fashionable opera of the day. When she was at the overture and the recitatives he looked perplexed, as if listening to a medley of madness; but when she struck upon some lively and expressive airs, he turned round with a look of great relief to the gentleman who was next to him, "Do you know, sir, *I love those lucid intervals!*"—JAMES DODDS ("Biographical Study of Chalmers").

*Musical
faculty.*

He dined latterly at one o'clock, and as he had to be at his class at two, the meal was necessarily a hurried one. He was indifferent about food, and remarkably abstemious. But there was no habit of

*"Exceeded
to-night at
supper."*

*"Exceeded
to-night at
supper."*

life about which he was so scrupulous. His private journals are filled with constant laments over his own incautiousness and excess at table; so much so, that were these journals ever to fall into the hands of one ignorant of Dr. Chalmers's habits, he might draw from them a conclusion exactly opposite to the truth. One night at supper at Merchiston Castle, a water biscuit, as thin as a wafer, but of large circumference, was put upon the plate before him. As he got into an animated conversation, he continued breaking down this biscuit into small parts, and eating them. When he discovered that the biscuit was consumed, he expressed himself surprised and shocked; and although that was all that he partook of upon this occasion, there was an entry that night in his journal—"exceeded to-night at supper."—WILLIAM HANNA ("Memoir of Chalmers").

*Habits in
society.*

His habits in society varied. Generally, when at his ease, and when his mind was not occupied with a train of thought, his conversation was full of interest, and it became so almost always when those who were with him touched upon a congenial subject, when he threw himself into it with all his peculiar strength and eloquence of language combined with the most unaffected simplicity; but at times I have seen him perfectly silent, and wearing that blank look which he could throw into his countenance when his mind was otherwise engaged. I remember the late Lady Colquhoun gave me an instance of this. . . . He had gone for the first time to pay a visit at Rossdhu, and Lady C. waited

his arrival with great anxiety ; when, however, he was shown into the drawing-room, after the first salutations were over, he sat perfectly silent, wearing his blank look. She tried a variety of subjects, but in vain, and he soon retired to his room. On coming down to dinner, he apologized, in the most amiable manner, for his silence, confessing that a train of thought on the subject on which he was writing had occurred to him on his journey to Ross-dhu, and that he was terrified lest, if he entered into conversation, he should lose it before it was secured on paper.—COLQUHOUN (quoted in Hanna's "Memoir of Chalmers").

*Habits in
society.*

He was a man of much natural dignity, ingenuity, honesty, and kind affection, as well as sound intellect and imagination. A very eminent vivacity lay in him, which could rise to complete impetuosity (growing conviction, passionate eloquence, fiery play of heart and head), all in a kind of *rustic* type, one might say, though wonderfully true and tender. He had a burst of genuine fun, too, I have heard, of the same honest but most plebeian broadly natural character ; his laugh was a hearty low guffaw ; and his tones in preaching would rise to the piercingly pathetic—no preacher ever went so into one's heart. He was a man essentially of little culture, of narrow sphere, all his life ; such an intellect professing to be educated, and yet so ill *read*, so ignorant in all that lay beyond the horizon in place or in time, I have almost nowhere met with. A man capable of much soaking indolence, lazy brooding and doing-nothingism, as the first stage of his life well indi-

*Limita-
tions.*

Limitations.

cated ; a man thought to be timid almost to the verge of cowardice, yet capable of impetuous activity and blazing audacity, as his latter years showed. —THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").¹

"A mere gurgle of syllables."

Greatly teased one day by a lady, who kept him listening to her for a long and at a very inconvenient time, he said to a friend after her departure, when describing the infliction from which he had just escaped—"And it would have been nothing if she had been saying anything to the purpose, but it was a *mere gurgle of syllables*."—WILLIAM HANNA ("Memoir of Chalmers").

Pleasures of horsemanship.

What most provoked him with his horse was the frequency with which it threw him. At first he was much interested by noticing the relative length of the intervals between each fall. Taking the average length, and calculating how far a dozen falls would carry him, he resolved to keep the horse till the twelfth fall was accomplished. Extremely fond of such numerical adjustments, he was most faithful in observing them. In this instance, however, the tenth fall was so bad a one that his resolution gave way, and he told his servant to take the horse to the next market, and sell him forthwith. "But remember," he said, "you must conceal none of its faults ;" and going through the formidable enumeration, he closed by bidding him to be sure to tell "that it had

¹ Carlyle (Thomas). *Reminiscences*. 8vo. Edited by J. A. Froude. London, 1881.

ten times thrown its present master." ¹—WILLIAM HANNA ("Memoir of Chalmers").

The . . . taste for numerical arrangement was exhibited in the most insignificant actions and habits of his life. It regulated every part of his toilet—down even to the daily stropping of his razor. Beginning with his minimum, which was two strokes, he added one stroke more each day successively, till he got up to a number fixed on as his maximum, on reaching which, he reversed the process, diminishing the number of his strokes by one each day, till the lowest point was touched. . . . It would be tedious . . . to tell how a like order was punctually observed in other parts of his toilet. He did almost everything by numbers. His staff was put down to the ground regularly at each fourth foot-fall; and the number of its descents gave him a pretty accurate measure of the space over which he walked. Habit had rendered the counting of these descents an easy, indeed almost a mechanical operation; so that, though meeting friends, and sustaining an animated conversation, it still went on.—WILLIAM HANNA ("Life of Chalmers").

*Numerical
amuse-
ments.*

His youthful freshness of feeling imparted a sin-

¹ This story occurs as a footnote, in relation to the following passage in Dr. Chalmers' Journal :—"Was annoyed with the peculiarities of my horse on the road, and gave way to an old habit of vehemence on the subject. This must be carefully guarded against." It would be rather interesting to know exactly what the Doctor said to that horse.

Youthfulness and simplicity.

gular charm to his manners and conversation. Even when verging on old age, he was very strikingly characterized by the simplicity of vivacious and unsuspecting boyhood. Of this peculiarity he was himself quite conscious, and I have heard him more than once allude to it. Having equipped himself one evening to go to Edinburgh, he appeared to have outgrown his ordinary dimensions—the pockets of his great-coat being well stuffed, I think, with books and pamphlets. This occasioned some merriment, in which he heartily joined. Placing his hands on his sides, he went on to say, “I have now somewhat of the solidity and gravity, and somewhat also of the breadth of middle age ; but I can scarcely shake off the feelings of boyhood. I remember, Mr. Couper, when I was a student at St. Andrews, with what profound veneration I regarded the Professors ; when I came to be a Professor there myself, I used to wonder if these gilpies could have the same feeling toward me.” . . . “When I meet,” he said, “a respectable matron, who is perhaps a dozen years younger than myself, I feel quite disposed to look up to her with the same sort of veneration that I felt when I was a boy.”—REV. — COUPER (quoted in Hanna's “Memoir of Chalmers”).

Unspoiled by applause.

He was utterly guileless ; as unspoiled by applause as ever Scott was. He might have been lived with without its ever being suspected that he was anything but a contented, good-hearted man. A taste for domination is one of the effects of long supremacy, but he had as little of this taste as was

possible, and no one ever combined it with such a total absence of arrogance. . . . That man of bold thoughts and of burning indignation, on whose opinions and words the country hung, as soon as the paroxysm of exertion was over, became as soft and as artless as an infant.—LORD COCKBURN ("Journal").¹

*Unspoiled
by applause.*

In the *New York Tribune* of March 16th, 1880, the following extract from the *London Times* was printed:—

Last night a public meeting was held in the Free Church Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, in celebration of the centenary of Dr. Thomas Chalmers. There was a large attendance. The following letter from Mr. Gladstone, addressed to Lord Moncreiff, was read:

*A remi-
niscence.*

"MY DEAR MONCREIFF: I wished to have written to you at leisure, but I have to-day observed, or reminded myself, that the occasion arrives to-morrow, so I must write in haste. . . . What I can now truly say is that there are hardly any words of admiration that could be employed concerning him to which I should scruple to subscribe. My knowledge of him was in a very early period of my manhood, when it was my father's wont to spend his Winters in Edinburgh. I have a certain number of his letters, and I remember how they were always subscribed by him, 'Yours respectfully,' or 'Yours most respectfully,' and that I was utterly at fault in

¹ Cockburn (Henry Thomas, Lord). *Journal*; being a Continuation of Memorials of his Time. 2 vols., 8vo. Edinburgh, 1874.

*A remi-
niscence.*

the attempt to find any words in return which would duly mark our several positions.

“He was one of nature’s nobles, and most of the qualities which stamped him with that character were obvious—almost glaring—to all who came across his path. I do not mean merely his rich and glowing eloquence, but his warrior grandeur, his unbounded philanthropy, his strength of purpose, his mental integrity, his absorbed and absorbing earnestness. They might not be so well aware of his singular simplicity and detachment from the world, of which I remember to have been deeply struck on a particular occasion.

“He sometimes gave me the honor of a walk with him, and one day he said he wished to make an appointment of this kind with me, when during our walk he would explain to me fully his situation with respect to the emoluments of his professorship—the chair of Divinity. If I remember right that chair, when he was appointed to it, was believed to have a large endowment, but a point of law was, I think, subsequently raised which, if affirmed, would have swept away nearly the whole. After forty-five years I may state this inaccurately, but what I remember clearly is that the question was a very grave one, and I think it materially affected his prospects, and even the status of himself and his family. The day came and the walk began, and lasted, I suppose, a couple of hours or more. At our starting he opened one of his favorite and engrossing subjects, probably that of evangelizing the country by the means of manageable districts, each with its church and minister. Having begun, he forgot all about his en-

dowment and his status. The conversation held fast by the original theme till we were within a few yards of my father's door. He seemed then to recollect himself, and said : ' If you will allow me I will send my man of business to call upon you, and he will acquaint you with all particulars of the question which has been raised.' Such was the impotence of lucre to lay hold on his great, stately and heavenly mind. After having thus given you a piece of him, which I think has internal evidence of being genuine, I will not detain you with anything more of himself ; but, wishing you all success in your rendering of honor to whom honor is due, I remain yours, etc.,

" W. E. GLADSTONE."

*A remi-
niscence.*

The great man was truly lovable, truly loved ; and nothing personally could be more modest, intent on his good industries, not on himself or his fame. Twice that I recollect I specially saw him ; once at his own house, to breakfast ; company Irving, one Crosby, . . . and thirdly myself. It was a cold vile smoky morning ; house and breakfast-room looked their worst in the dismal light. Doctor himself was hospitably kind, but spoke little and engaged none of us in talk. Oftenest, I could see, he was absent, wandering in distant fields of abstruse character, to judge by the sorrowful glaze which came over his honest eyes and face. . . . The second time was in a fine drawing-room . . . in a rather solemn evening party, where the doctor, perhaps bored by the secularities and trivialities elsewhere, put his chair beside mine in some clear space of floor, and talked earnestly for a good while

*Carlyle's
general
estimate.*

Carlyle's
general
estimate.

on some scheme he had for proving Christianity by its visible fitness for human nature—"All written in us already," he said, "*in sympathetic ink*. Bible awakens it; and you can read." I listened respectfully, not with any real conviction, only with a clear sense of the geniality and goodness of the man.—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").

JOHN WILSON.

1785-1854.



John Nelson.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

HERE is a man who takes us fairly out-of-doors, and fills us with an invigorating sense of life and exuberant activity. Where should we look for Christopher North but in the woods and fields?—strolling with rod in hand along a brook—climbing the rugged mountain-sides—"Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe." If we picture him to ourselves in town, it is as the sturdy athlete, gladly putting forth his strength to defend the weak ; the successful combatant in many a street brawl. Or else we see him dimly, puffing his clay pipe ; beaming with good-fellowship, half-hidden by the clouds of steam which rise from the capacious punch-bowl, behind which he sits surrounded by loving cronies, and himself the very embodiment of good-fellowship—*facile princeps* among his "co-mates and brothers in"—jollity.

It seems an anomaly, a cruel departure from the natural order of things, that such a man should voluntarily choose a life of authorship—nay more, that he should enter the precincts of grave academic halls as the teacher of moral philosophy ! It is far

more natural to think of him as a soldier, the foremost man in every danger, or as one of our own western frontiersmen, freed from social restraints, rejoicing in a wild life of adventure, exclaiming with the fiery Moor,

“I would not my unhoused free condition
Put into circumscription and confine
For the sea’s worth !”

Such men chafe uneasily beneath the harness of civilized customs, and are wont to scandalize their decorous neighbors by ignoring or breaking through the conventional proprieties. Their strong animal life and their buoyant, irrepressible spirits clamor for manifestation and exercise, with a vehemence which men of cooler blood and less ardent vitality regard with the bewilderment of partial understanding and imperfect sympathy. Natures so constituted cannot long endure the repression of a quiet life. So Wilson spent the night in hunting bulls over the rough Scottish moors ; so he pitted himself in combat against professional bruisers, and threw himself with eager delight into every kind of physical activity. Even his fighting comes under the same general category ; it was not the result of pugnacity, but was simply one of the many ways in which he strove to satisfy his unappeasable desire for action.

He was thoroughly in earnest. Whatever he did, was done with his might. He wrote his contributions to *Blackwood*, and delivered his university lectures, with the same steadfast concentration of purpose, the same fervid enthusiasm, which in-

spired his less notable achievements, and which lent a certain dignity even to his pugilism. Remembering the temperament and physical constitution of the man, and considering the manners of the time in which he lived, his escapades do not seem very singular. It is not at all surprising that he broke out of bounds,—but the fact that his irregularities did not seriously impair his usefulness is a significant indication of the strength and stability of his character. We feel sure that his nature was intrinsically sound, when we see that his “violent delights” had not “violent ends;” that they did not unfit him for more tranquil pleasures, and that the boisterous, turbulent scenes of his youth and prime in nowise disqualified him for the eminence of being the favorite companion and playfellow of his grandchildren.

The “Memoir of Wilson” by his daughter, Mrs. Gordon, is the principal authority. This is one of the best literary biographies in existence, and furnishes ample materials for a work like the present. The numerous extracts which have been made from Mrs. Gordon’s volume do not at all exhaust its interest. Dr. R. Shelton Mackenzie’s edition of the “*Noctes Ambrosianæ*” contains an excellent memoir of Wilson (by Dr. M.), and many interesting notices of him. De Quincey’s “*Literary Reminiscences*” give some particulars not to be found elsewhere; and there are readable articles in *Blackwood’s Magazine*, May and December, 1854; in the *Dublin University Magazine*, May, 1854; and in the *National Review*, April, 1884.

LEADING EVENTS OF WILSON'S LIFE.

1785. Born, May 18th, at Paisley.
- 1797.—(Aged 12.) A scholar at the University of Glasgow.
- 1803.—(Aged 18.) Enters Oxford University.
- 1807.—(Aged 22.) Leaves Oxford.
- 1811.—(Aged 26.) Marries Miss Jane Penny.
- 1812.—(Aged 27.) Publishes "The Isle of Palms."
- 1815.—(Aged 30.) Called to the bar.
- 1816.—(Aged 31.) Publishes "The City of the Plague."
- 1817.—(Aged 32.) Contributes to *Blackwood's Magazine*.
- 1820.—(Aged 35.) Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University.
- 1822.—(Aged 37.) Publishes "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life."
- 1825.—(Aged 40.) Publishes "The Forresters."
- 1837.—(Aged 52.) His wife dies.
- 1851.—(Aged 66.) Resigns his professorship. Receives a pension of three hundred pounds per annum.
- 1852.—(Aged 67.) Publishes his last contribution to *Blackwood's Magazine*.
- 1854.—(Aged 68 years and 10 months.) Dies, April 3d.

JOHN WILSON.

IN his childish years, John Wilson was as beautiful and animated a creature as ever played in the sunshine. That passion for sports, and especially angling, in which his strong nature found such characteristic vent in after-years, was developed at an age when most little boys are still hardly safe beyond the nurse's apron-strings.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").¹

Childhood.

Of the precocity of the boy there is evidence enough ; but, unlike most precocious children, he was foremost in the play-ground as well as at the task. With him both work and play were equally enjoyed, and he threw his whole energy into the one or other in its turn. In school he was every inch the scholar ; but when the books were laid aside, and the fresh air played on his bright cheeks, he was king of all sports, the foremost and the maddest in every jocund enterprise.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

Boy-life.

Of in-door amusements, the most exciting . . .

¹ Gordon (Mrs. Mary). Christopher North. A Memoir of John Wilson. 2 vols., 8vo. Edinburgh, 1862.

A precocious orator.

was that of pulpit oratory. One sermon he used himself to speak of as being a *chef d'œuvre*. . . .

The text chosen was one from his own fertile brain, drawn from that field of experience in which he was already becoming an adept, and handled not without shrewd application to moral duties. These were the words: "There was a fish, and it was a deil o' a fish, and it was ill to its young anes." In this allegory of life he displayed both pathos and humor, drawing a contrast between good and evil parents that excited sympathy and laughter, while the sermon was delivered with a vehemence of natural eloquence that, in a boy of five years old, may well have entitled him to be looked upon as a genius.—
MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

Reminiscences of a college friend.

I am glad to be able to make up, in some respects, for the meagreness of these outlines,¹ by some very interesting reminiscences kindly furnished by one who truly says, that he is "perhaps the only person now living who could give so many details at the end of half a century."

"I became acquainted with the late Professor Wilson at Magdalen College, Oxford, about the year 1807 or 1808. He had already graduated . . . when I entered that College as a gentleman-commoner. His personal appearance was very remarkable; he was a powerfully built man, of great muscular strength, about five feet ten inches high, a very broad chest, wearing a great profusion of hair and enormous whiskers, which in those days were

¹ Concerning his life at Oxford.

very unusually seen, particularly in the University. He was considered the strongest, most athletic, and most active man of those days at Oxford. . . .

*Remi-
niscences of
a college
friend.*

"It was the habit and fashion of those days to drink what would now be considered freely. The observance was not neglected at *Maudlin*. . . . Wilson's great conversational powers were drawn out during these social hours. He delighted in discussions, and would often advance paradoxes even, in order to raise a debate. It was evident that (like Dr. Johnson) he had not determined which side of the argument he would take upon the question he had raised. Once he had decided *that* point, he opened with a flow of eloquence, learning and wit, which became gradually an absolute torrent, upon which he generally tided into the small hours. No interruption, no difference of opinion, however warmly expressed, could ruffle for a moment his imperturbable good temper. . . . There was a versatility of talent and eloquence (*not of opinions*) in Wilson, such as I have never seen equalled. I have heard him with equal cleverness argue in favor and disparagement of constitutional, absolute, and democratic forms of government; one evening you should suppose him to be (*as he really was*) a most determined, unbending Tory; the next he assumed to be a thorough Whig of the old school; on a third, you would conclude him to be a violent and dangerous democrat! . . . I may sum up his characteristics, as they appeared to me, in a few words: simplicity, kindness, learning, with *chivalry*; for certainly his views and sentiments were highly chivalrous, and had he lived in those days, he would have

been found among the foremost of 'les preux chevaliers.' . . .

*Reminiscences of
a college
friend.*

"One of his great amusements was to go to the 'Angel Inn,' about midnight, where many of the up and down London coaches met ; there he used to preside at the passengers' supper-table, carving for them, inquiring all about their respective journeys, why and wherefore they were made, etc. : and in return, astonishing them with his wit and pleasantry, and sending them off wondering who and what *he* could be ! He frequently went from the 'Angel' to the 'Fox and Geese,' an early 'purl and gill' house, where he found the coachmen and guards, etc., preparing for the coaches which had left London late at night ; and there he found an audience, and sometimes remained till the college-gates were opened.

College life.

. . . It must not be supposed, that in these strange meetings he indulged in intemperance ; no such thing ; he went to such places, I am convinced, to study character, in which they abounded. I never saw him show the slightest appearance even of drink, notwithstanding our wine-drinking, suppers, punch, and smoking in the common room, to very late hours. I never shall forget his figure, sitting with a long earthen pipe, a great *tie* wig on ; those wigs had descended, I fancy, from the days of Addison . . . and were worn by us all (in order, I presume, to preserve our hair and dress from tobacco-smoke) when smoking commenced, after supper.

"His pedestrian feats were marvellous. On one occasion, having been absent a day or two, we asked him, on his return to the common room, where he

had been? He said, in London. When did you return? This morning. How did you come? On foot. As we all expressed surprise, he said; 'Why, the fact is, I dined yesterday with a friend in Grosvenor (I think it was) Square, and as I quitted the house, a fellow who was passing was impertinent and insulted me, upon which I knocked him down; and as I did not choose to have myself called in question for a street row, I at once started, as I was, in my dinner dress, and never stopped until I got to the College gate this morning, as it was being opened.' Now this was a walk of fifty-eight miles at least, which he must have got over in eight or nine hours at most, supposing him to have left the dinner-party at nine in the evening."¹—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

College life.

Of the characteristic mixture of work and play which enabled him to be both an active and distinguished student, and a vivacious racer and dancer, there is fortunately some slight record extant under his own youthful hand, in the pages of a little brown memorandum-book, in which he carefully noted the chief transactions of each day from the 1st of January to the 26th of October, 1801. A very interesting and curious relic it is, if only for the light it throws on that beautiful portrait by Raeburn, now in the National Gallery, Edinburgh, which has probably disappointed so many people as a representation of young Christopher North. That slender

*Contrast
between his
youth and
manhood.*

¹ Wilson and De Quincey were contemporaries at Oxford; but they did not become acquainted until years afterward.

*Contrast
between his
youth and
manhood.*

youth, so tidily dressed in his top-boots and well-fitting coat, with face so placid, and blue eyes so mild, looking as if he never could do or say any thing *outré* or startling,—can that be a good picture of him we have seen and heard of as the long-maned and mighty, whose eyes were “as the lightnings of fiery flame,” and his voice like an organ bass; who laid about him, when the fit was on, like a Titan, breaking small men’s bones; who was loose and careless in his apparel, even as in all things he seemed too strong and primitive to heed much the niceties of custom? So people ask and think who knew not Professor Wilson, save out of doors or in print, and who imagine that he could never have been otherwise than as they saw him in manhood or age. But true it is, that that gentle-looking cavalier represents the John Wilson in whom the deep fires of passion and the hidden riches of imagination lay still comparatively quiescent and undeveloped. . . . The man whom we know in after-life jotting down his lectures on old backs of letters, illegible sometimes to himself, at this time keeps a neat and punctual diary, with its ink rulings for month, and week, and day, and £ s. d., all done by his own hand.¹ . . . It is altogether an illustration of

¹ Mr. R. H. Patterson, in his *Essays in History and Art* (Edinburgh and London, 1862), says: “His handwriting, curiously enough, reflected the change which occurred in his intellectual temperament when he forsook verse for prose. The manuscript of the ‘Isle of Palms,’ that dreamy and paradisaical tale of the sea, is singularly elegant and clear; but as he advanced in years, and threw himself impetuously into that poetic prose which proved so congenial to him, his manuscript broke the fetters of

character that might surprise the uninitiated even more than Raeburn's portrait. —MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

Figure to yourself . . . a man about six feet high, within half an inch or so, built with tolerable appearance of strength ; but at the date of my description (that is, in the very spring-tide and bloom of youth), wearing, for the predominant character of his person, lightness and agility or (in our Westmoreland phrase) *lishness*, he seemed framed with an express view to gymnastic exercises of every sort. . . . Viewed, therefore, by an eye learned in gymnastic proportions, Mr. Wilson presented a somewhat striking figure. . . . His complexion was too florid, hair of a hue quite unsuited to that complexion ; eyes not good, having no apparent depth, but seeming mere surfaces ; and, in fine, no one feature that could be called fine, except the lower region of his face, mouth, chin, and the parts adjacent, which were then . . . truly elegant and Ciceronian. . . . Taken as a whole, though not handsome (as I have already said), when viewed in a quiescent state, the head and countenance are massy, dignified, and expressive of tranquil sagacity. . . . Note, however, that of all this array of personal features, as I have here described them, I then saw nothing at all, my attention

In youth.

neatness and precision, and became bounding and leaping, hurrying along in almost illegible haste, and evidently tasked to the utmost to keep pace with the rapid outpourings of the mental fountains."

In youth.

being altogether occupied with Mr. Wilson's conversation and demeanor, which were in the highest degree agreeable ; the points which chiefly struck me being the humility and gravity with which he spoke of himself, his large expansion of heart, and a certain air of noble frankness which overspread every thing he said ; he seemed to have an intense enjoyment of life ; indeed, being young, rich, healthy, and full of intellectual activity, it could not be very wonderful that he should feel happy and pleased with himself and others ; but it was somewhat unusual to find that so rare an assemblage of endowments had communicated no tinge of arrogance to his manner, or at all disturbed the general temperance of his mind.¹—THOMAS DE QUINCEY (*Edinburgh Literary Gazette*, quoted in the "Memoir of Wilson").

Personal appearance.

A very robust, athletic man, broad across the back—firm set upon his limbs—and having altogether that sort of air which is inseparable from the consciousness of great bodily energies. I suppose in leaping, wrestling, or boxing, he might easily beat any of the poets, his contemporaries. . . . In complexion, he is the best specimen I have ever seen of the genuine or ideal *Goth*. His hair is of the true Sicambrian yellow ; his eyes are of the lightest, and at the same time of the clearest blue. . . . I had never suspected before I saw him, that such extreme fairness and freshness of complexion could be compatible with so much variety and

¹ With his usual carelessness about dates, De Quincey does not tell us when this meeting took place, but Mrs. Gordon says that it was in 1808, at which time Wilson was twenty-three years old.

tenderness, but, above all, with so much depth of expression. . . . I have never seen a physiognomy which could pass with so much rapidity from the serious to the most ludicrous of effects. It is more eloquent, both in its gravity and in its levity, than almost any countenance I am acquainted with is in any one cast of expression.—J. G. LOCKHART (“Peter’s Letters to his Kinsfolk,” 1819).

*Personal
appearance.*

Walking up and down the hall of the courts of law . . . was a tall, burly, handsome man of eight-and-fifty, with a gait like O’Connell’s, the bluest eye you can imagine, and long hair—longer than mine—falling down in a wild way under the broad brim of his hat. He had on a surtout coat, a blue checked shirt; the collar standing up, and kept in its place with a wisp of black neckerchief; no waistcoat; and a large pocket-handkerchief thrust into his breast, which was all broad and open. At his heels followed a wiry, sharp-eyed, shaggy devil of a terrier, dogging his steps as he went slashing up and down, now with one man beside him, now with another, and now quite alone, but always at a fast, rolling pace, with his head in the air, and his eyes as wide open as he could get them. I guessed it was Wilson, and it was. A bright, clear-complexioned, mountain-looking fellow, he looks as if he had just come down from the Highlands, and had never in his life taken pen in hand.—CHARLES DICKENS (from a letter of 1841, quoted by Forster).¹

¹ Forster (John). *Life of Charles Dickens*. 3 vols., 8vo. London, 1872-74.

*Personal
appearance.*

There is not the least exaggeration in this description by Dickens of the carelessness of Wilson's dress. He always looked to me as if he had slept in his clothes, and having been suddenly awakened, had been forced to hurry away, without having time to put them and his person in order.—ROBERT TOMES ("My College Days").

His stature was far over the common height. His figure, at the age of sixty-seven, when I last saw him, was as erect as it had been in early manhood. Time had tinged his yellow hair with gray, but, to the last, it floated wildly over a brow of remarkable expression, beneath which beamed blue eyes, which seemed to measure your mind and body at a glance. Of all men, he who most resembled Wilson in personal appearance was Audubon, the naturalist ;—less robust, and with a face more angular in some of its lines, Audubon appeared, as Wilson did, like a man who had spent much of his time in the open air. There was a marked resemblance in feature, also, as in form. Wilson and Audubon might have passed for brothers.—R. SHELTON MACKENZIE ("Life of Wilson").¹

We shall no more ² recognize in the distance the well known broad rimmed hat, shadowing those bold

¹ Wilson (John). *Noctes Ambrosianæ*. Edited, with Memoir and Notes, by Robert Shelton Mackenzie. 5 vols., 12mo. New York, 1854.

² The article from which this description is taken, was first published in the Dublin University Magazine, May, 1854, upon the occasion of Wilson's death.

bright eyes—the ever-fresh complexion, the sandy-colored hair streaming dishevelled over his shoulders; the shaggy whiskers, handsome throat, and broad turned-over collar; the buttoned coat or surtout, and the firm limbs that seemed to grasp the very earth as he strode along.—R. H. PATTERSON (“Essays”).¹

*Personal
appearance.*

John Wilson . . . was a stout, tall, athletic man, with broad shoulders and chest, and prodigiously muscular limbs. His face was magnificent; his hair, which he wore long and flowing, fell round his massive features like a lion's mane, to which, indeed, it was often compared, being much of the same hue. His lips were always working, while his gray flashing eyes had a weird sort of look which was highly characteristic. In his dress he was singularly slovenly, being, except on state occasions, attired in a threadbare suit of clothes, often rent, his shirts frequently buttonless, and his hat of the description anciently called shocking. His professional style of costume was just as odd. His gown, as he stalked along the college terraces, flew in tattered stripes behind him; and, altogether, John Wilson, with all his genius, was personally one of the most strangely eccentric of the many eccentric characters existing in his day in the metropolis of the north.—ANON. (*Morning Chronicle*, 1854).

His conversation and his public speaking had in

¹ Patterson (R. H.). *Essays in History and Art*. 8vo. Edinburgh and London, 1862.

*Conversa-
tion.*

them a charm to which no other term is applicable but that of fascination, and which, in the zenith of his powers, we never met with any one able to resist. While his glittering eye held the spectators captive, and the music of the ever-varying voice, modulating up and down with the changing character of the theme, fell on the ear, and a flood of imagery invested the subject with every conceivable attribute of the touching, the playful, or the picturesque, the effect was electric, indescribable.—ANON. (*Blackwood's Magazine*, May, 1854).

*Talk by the
way.*

Who ever enjoyed his conversation at home or abroad, among the woods and wilds of nature, or on the busy streets of Edinburgh, that was not as often overpowered by his humor as by his wit, by his wisdom as by his eloquence? His manner in mixing the talk with the walk was peculiar. He took several steps alongside of you, conducting you on to the essential point, then, when he had reached that, he stopped, "right-about faced," stood in front of you, looking full at you, and delivered the conclusion, then released you from the stop you were forced to make, walked on a few paces, and turned in the same manner again.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

Oratory.

His declamation is often loose and irregular to an extent that is not quite worthy of a man of his fine education and masculine powers; but all is redeemed, and more than redeemed, by his rich abundance of quick, generous, and expansive feeling. The flashing brightness, and now and then the still

more expressive dimness of his eye—and the tremulous music of a voice that is equally at home in the highest and the lowest of notes—and the attitude, bent forward with an earnestness to which the graces could make no valuable addition—all together compose an index which they that run may read.

. . . With such gifts as these, and with the noblest of themes to excite and adorn them, I have no doubt that Mr. Wilson, had he been in the church, would have left all the impassioned preachers I have ever heard, many thousand leagues behind him.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk").

Wilson's eloquence was of a very brilliant kind, but it had not the condensation necessary for the highest flights of oratory. He was enthusiastic, poetical, diffuse, but not weighty. With an unbounded command of language and romantic imagery, he wanted those brief expressions and burning thoughts which strike home to the human heart. Hence his speeches sounded better at the time than they appeared on reflection; and while they delighted all present, left little that could be carried away or stored in the memory.—SIR A. ALISON ("Autobiography").

He had an energy of diction, a flow of fancy, a fluency of expression, and a wealth of language such as I have never met, before or since, combined in one man. The great charm—the reality of Wilson's eloquence was, that *it was wholly spontaneous and unprepared*.—R. SHELTON MACKENZIE ("Life of Wilson").

Oratory.

*In his
class-room.*

His appearance in his class-room it is far easier to remember than to forget. He strode into it with the professor's gown hanging loosely on his arms, took a comprehensive view over the mob of young faces, laid down his watch so as to be out of the reach of his sledge-hammer fist, glanced at the notes of his lecture (generally written on the most wonderful scraps of paper), and then, to the bewilderment of those who had never heard him before, looked long and earnestly out of the north window, towards the spire of the old Tron Kirk ; until, having at last got his idea, he faced round and uttered it with eye and hand, and voice and soul and spirit, and bore the class along with him. As he spoke, the bright blue eye looked with a strange gaze into vacancy, sometimes sparkling with a coming joke, sometimes darkening before a rush of indignant eloquence ; the tremulous upper lip curving with every wave of thought or hint of passion, and the golden-grey hair floating on the old man's mighty shoulders—if indeed that could be called age, which seemed but the immortality of a more majestic youth. And occasionally, in the finer frenzy of his more imaginative passages—as when he spoke of Alexander, clay-cold at Babylon, with the world lying conquered around his tomb, or of the Highland hills, that pour the rage of cataracts adown their riven cliffs, or even of the human mind, with its “primeval granitic truths,” the grand old face flushed with the proud thought, and the eyes grew dim with tears, and the magnificent frame quivered with a universal emotion.—ALEXANDER T. INNES (quoted in the “Memoir of Wilson”).

*In his
class-room.*

If we followed his firm and erect step into the lecture-room, and took our seat among the enthusiasts, both young and old, who waited on his words, the grand head and face of the poet, "all compact;" the magnificent chest, that rose above the box-shaped desk; . . . the dishevelled hair; the enraptured look; the abrupt and somewhat (as we fancied) husky voice,—all served to herald the utterances that were to follow. And then, when they did come, they came at first by sudden, violent plunges or jerks, until the ravelled ends of yesterday's lecture were got firmly seized. He more than once lost his place entirely—for they were all *written* lectures in Edinburgh—scribbled, as his lecture was, in the most careless manner, on the backs of old letters. When this was the case—and we believe it occurred often—every pen was still, every note-book lay unused, and the audience, with heads thrust forward, and eager expectancy in every look, awaited the torrents of eloquence which would burst from the chair for the rest of the hour. . . . His voice, which was rich and melodious in conversation, was not, as we think, in his later years, well adapted for lecturing. His speech wanted that continuity, that broad, full stream of words, which is one of the lecturer's best gifts; and, except when he was quite carried away with his subject, he seemed as if unprepared. This peculiarity had the effect of riveting the attention of his audience more closely on the speaker; for never was there a greater mistake than to suppose that Wilson did not know what to say. The plaudits and stifled cheers that burst involuntarily from all corners of the room, testified

how he triumphed over their expectancy, as a hunted deer bounds over any obstacle in her path.—ANON. (*North British Review*, January, 1863).

His treatment of his scholars.

In the multifarious nature of Wilson his mastery over the hearts of ingenuous youth is one of his finest characteristics. It was often won in this peculiar way: An essay is submitted to him as professor, editor, or friend, by some worthy young man. Mr. Wilson does not like it, and says so in general terms. The youth is not satisfied, and, in the tone of one rather injured, begs to know specific faults. The generous Aristarch, never dealing haughtily with a young worth, instantly sits down, and begins by conveying, in the most fearless terms of praise, his sense of that worth; but, this done, woe be to the luckless piece of prose or "numerous verse"! Down goes the scalpel with the most minute savagery of dissection, and the whole tissues and ramifications of fault are laid bare. The young man is astonished; but his nature is of the right sort; he never forgets the lesson; and with bands of filial affection stronger than hooks of steel he is knit for life to the man who has dealt with him thus.—THOMAS AIRD ("Memoir of D. M. Moir").¹

Singing.

He was . . . a devoted lover of music, both vocal and instrumental, though always preferring the former. His singing was charming, uncultivated as it was by study; no one could listen to it with-

¹ Moir (David M.). *Poetical Works*. 2 vols., 16mo. Edited, with a Memoir, by Thomas Aird. Edinburgh, 1852.

out admiration or a touched heart. His voice was exquisitely sweet, which, combined with the pathos he infused into every note, and expressed in every word, made the pleasure of hearing him a thing to be remembered forever. His manner of singing "Auld Lang Syne" may be described as a tribute of love to the memory of the poet, whose words appeared to inspire him with something beyond vocal melody; his sweet, solemn voice filled the air with sounds that, while they melted away, seemed still to linger on the ear, delighting the sense. Many are there who can remember the effect produced by his rendering of this beautiful song.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

Singing.

In speaking of his room . . . something may be said of that careless habit which overtook him in his later years, and gave to his whole appearance an air of reckless freedom. His room was a strange mixture of what may be called order and untidiness, for there was not a scrap of paper or a book, that his hand could not light upon in a moment, while to the casual eye, in search of discovery, it would appear chaos. . . .

The lion in his den.

To any one whose delight lay in beauty of furniture, or quaint and delicate ornament, well-appointed arrangements, . . . that apartment must have appeared a mere lumber-room. The book-shelves were of unpainted wood, knocked up in the rudest fashion, and their volumes, though not wanting in number or excellence, wore but shabby habiliments, many of them being tattered and without backs. The chief pieces of furniture

*The lion in
his den.*

in this room were two cases ; one containing specimens of foreign birds, . . . which was used incongruously enough sometimes as a wardrobe ; the other was a book-case, but not entirely devoted to books ; its glass doors permitted a motley assortment of articles to be seen. The spirit, the tastes and habits of the possessor were all to be found there, side by side like a little community of domesticities.

For example, resting upon the *Wealth of Nations* lay shining coils of gut, set off by pretty pink twinings. Peeping out from *Beviana*, in juxtaposition with the *Faëry Queen*, were no end of delicately dressed *flies* ; and pocket-books well filled with gear for the "gentle craft" found company with Shakespeare and Ben Jonson ; while fishing-rods, in pieces, stretched their elegant lengths along the shelves, embracing a whole set of poets. Nor was the gravest philosophy without its contrast, and Jeremy Taylor, too, found innocent repose in the neighborhood of a tin box of barley-sugar. . . . Here and there, in the interstices between books, were stuffed what appeared to be dingy, crumpled bits of paper—those were bank-notes, his *class fees*—not unfrequently, for want of a purse, thrust to the bottom of an old worsted stocking, when not honored by a place in the book-case. I am certain he very rarely counted over the fees taken from his students. He never looked at or touched money in the usual way ; he very often forgot where he put it ; saving when these stocking banks were his humor ; no one, for its own sake, or for his own purposes, ever regarded riches with such perfect indifference. . . . And so there he sat, in the majesty of unaffected

At home.

dignity, surrounded by a homeliness that still left him a type of the finest gentleman; courteous to all, easy and unembarrassed in address, wearing his *negligé* with as much grace as a courtier his lace and plumes. . . .

At home.

He never, even in very cold weather, had a fire in his room; nor did it at night, as most apartments do, get heat from gas, which he particularly disliked, remaining faithful to the primitive candle—a large vulgar tallow, set in a suitable candlestick composed of ordinary tin. . . . What his fancy for this was I cannot say, but he never did, and would not, make use of any other.—MRS. GORDON (“Memoir of Wilson”).

His habit of composition, or rather I should say the execution of it, was not always ordered best for his comfort. The amazing rapidity with which he wrote, caused him too often to delay his work to the very last moment, so that he almost always wrote under compulsion, and every second of time was of consequence. . . . When regularly in for an article for *Blackwood*, his whole strength was put forth, and it may be said he struck into life what he had to do at a blow. He at these times began to write immediately after breakfast, that meal being dispatched with a swiftness commensurate with the necessity of the case before him. He then shut himself into his study, with an express command that no one was to disturb him, and he never stirred from his writing-table until perhaps the greater part of a “Noctes” was written, or some paper of equal brilliancy and interest completed. The idea of

*Methods of
work.*

*Methods of
work.*

breaking his labor by taking a constitutional walk never entered his thoughts for a moment. Whatever he had to write, even though a day or two were to keep him close at work, he never interrupted his pen, saving to take his night's rest, and a late dinner served to him in his study. The hour for that meal was on these occasions nine o'clock ; his dinner then consisted invariably of a boiled fowl, potatoes, and a glass of water—he allowed himself no wine. After dinner he resumed his pen till midnight, when he retired to bed, not unfrequently to be disturbed by an early printer's boy ; . . . I do not exaggerate his power of speed, when I say he wrote more in a few hours than most able writers do in a few days ; examples of it I have often seen in the very manuscript before him, which, disposed on the table, was soon transferred to the more roomy space of the floor at his feet, where it lay "thick as autumnal leaves in Vallambrosa."—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

*Mind out-
lasting
body.*

As a proof of how long his mental vigor and capacity of exertion survived the effects of physical decline, it may be mentioned that two of the papers entitled "Dies Boreales" . . . were written by him in August and September, 1852, some months after the occurrence of that calamity¹ by which his strong frame had been stricken down ; papers written with his usual fine perception and impressive diction, but in a hand so tremulous, so feeble and indistinct, as to prove the strong effort of will by which

¹ A stroke of paralysis.

alone such a task could have been accomplished.—
ANON. (*Blackwood's Magazine*, May, 1854).

Mr. Wilson had then (1817) a rapidity of executive power in composition, such as I have never seen equalled before or since. In that way he might be said to realize even the wonders which are ascribed to Lope de Vega.—R. P. GILLIES ("Memoirs of a Literary Veteran").

*Rapidity of
his com-
position.*

In an anonymous article, published in the *Spectator*, soon after Professor Wilson's death, in 1854, we are told that "the drinking feats attributed to him are either gross inventions, or literal acceptations of the humorous caricatures of the 'Noctes Ambrosianæ;' they who were intimate with Wilson know that he neither required nor used to excess the stimulus of strong drink. He enjoyed the most extravagant hilarity of the social board, but could work himself up to the highest pitch by the sheer effort of talking." With every wish to do full justice to the memory of a distinguished man, it is quite impossible to accept the inferences which are involved in this statement. There has, doubtless, been much exaggeration in regard to Wilson's convivial habits, but it will not mend the matter to ignore the facts of the case. In view of the abundant and convincing testimony upon this subject, the testimony of responsible and friendly observers, it seems the height of folly to deny that Wilson made a very free use of alcoholic stimulants. In 1820, after Wilson's nomination for the professorship to which he was subsequently

*Use of stim-
ulants.*

Use of stimulants.

elected, Scott wrote to Lockhart, as follows :—" You must, of course, recommend to Wilson great temper in his canvass—for wrath will do no good. After all, he must leave off sack, purge, and live cleanly as a gentleman ought to do ; otherwise people will compare his present ambition to that of Sir Terry O'Fag when he wished to become a judge. ' Our pleasant follies are made the whips to scourge us,' as Lear says ; for otherwise what could possibly stand in the way of his nomination ? " It must be remembered that this was the letter of a warm admirer and a personal friend of Wilson's, written wholly in his interest. Lord Cranbrook, in an article published in the *National Review*, April, 1884, describes an interview which he had with Wilson in 1843. He says " the calmer feelings of age may probably be deepened by his change of *regimen*, which is very great, for from being one of the most generous of livers he has become, not by pledge, but in practice, a tetotalter." See, also, pp. 195, 207.

A day's fishing.

In Glenorchy, his time was much occupied by fishing, and distance was not considered an obstacle. He started one morning at an early hour to fish in a loch which at that time abounded in trout, in the Braes of Glenorchy, called Loch Toila. Its nearest point was thirteen miles distant from his lodging. . . . On reaching it, and unscrewing the butt-end of his fishing-rod to get the top, he found he had it not. Nothing daunted, he walked back, breakfasted, got his fishing-rod, made all complete, and off again to Loch Toila. He could not resist fishing on the river when a pool looked invitingly,

but he went always onwards, reached the loch a second time, fished round it, and found that the long summer day had come to an end. He set off for his home again with his fishing-basket full, and confessing somewhat to weariness. Passing near a farm-house whose inmates he knew, . . . he went to get some food. They were in bed, for it was eleven o'clock at night, and after rousing them, the hostess hastened to supply him; but he requested her to get him some whiskey and milk. She came with a bottle-full, and a can of milk with a tumbler. Instead of a tumbler, he requested a bowl, and poured the half of the whiskey in, along with half the milk. He drank the mixture at a draught, and while his kind hostess was looking on with amazement, he poured the remainder of the whisky and milk into the bowl, and drank that also. He then proceeded homeward, performing a journey of not less than seventy miles.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

A day's fishing.

Among the other amusements with which he diversified life in the country, boating was one of the principal. As may be supposed, this was a favorite diversion in the lake country, and Wilson's taste for it was cultivated with a zeal that, in fact, became a passion. The result was a degree of skill and hardihood beyond that of most amateurs. . . .

Boating.

One or two anecdotes still linger about the country, showing how recklessly Wilson could expose himself at all hours to the chances of the weather. Cold, snow, wind and rain were no obstacles; nothing could repress the impulse that

Boating.

drove him forth to seek nature in all her moods. During a stormy December night, when the snow was falling fast, with little or no light in the heavens, he took a fancy to tempt the waters of Windermere, and setting off with the never-failing Billy,¹ they took boat from Miller-ground and steered for Bowness. In a short time all knowledge of the point to which they were bound was lost. The darkness became more dismal every moment; the cold was intolerable. Several hours were spent in this dreary position, poor Billy in despair, expecting every instant would find them at the bottom of the lake, when suddenly the skiff went aground. The oars were not long in being made use of to discover the nature of their disaster, what and where they had struck, when, to their great satisfaction, a landing-place was found. They had been beating about Miller-ground all the time, scarcely a stone's-throw from the starting-place. Billy's account of the story was, "that Master was well-nigh frozen to death, and had icicles a finger-length hanging from his hair and beard." This adventure ended in the toll-keeper on the Ambleside road being knocked up from his slumbers, and their spending the rest of the night with him, seated by a blazing fire, telling stories and drinking ale, a temptation to which Billy had no difficulty in yielding.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

Represent to yourself the earliest dawn of a fine summer's morning, time about half-past two o'clock.

¹ His boatman.

A young man, anxious for an introduction to Mr. Wilson, and as yet nearly a stranger in the country, has taken up his abode in Grasmere, and has strolled out at this early hour to that rocky and moorish common (called the White Moss) which overhangs the Vale of Rydal, dividing it from Grasmere.¹ Looking southwards in the direction of Rydal, suddenly he becomes aware of a huge beast advancing at a long trot, with the heavy and thundering tread of a hippopotamus, along the public road. The creature is soon arrived within half a mile of his station; and by the grey light of morning is at length made out to be a bull apparently flying from some unseen enemy in his rear. As yet, however, all is mystery; but suddenly three horsemen double a turn in the road, and come flying into sight with the speed of a hurricane, manifestly in pursuit of the fugitive bull; the bull labors to navigate his huge bulk to the moor, which he reaches, and then pauses, panting, and blowing out clouds of smoke from his nostrils, to look back from his station upon rocks and slippery crags upon his hunters. If he had conceived that the rockiness of the ground had secured his repose, the foolish bull is soon undeceived; the horsemen, scarcely relaxing their speed, charge up the hill, and speedily gaining the rear of the bull, drive him at a gallop over the worst part of that impracticable ground down into the level ground below. At this point of time the stranger

A strange sport.

Unusual hunting.

¹ This capital story furnishes a quaintly unconscious illustration of its writer's own personal habits—habits quite as peculiar as those of Professor Wilson.

*Unusual
hunting.*

perceives, by the increasing light of the morning, that the hunters are armed with immense spears fourteen feet long. With these the bull is soon dislodged, and scouring down to the plain below, he and the hunters at his tail take to the common at the head of the lake, and all, in the madness of the chase, are soon half ingulfed in the swamps of the morass. After plunging together for ten or fifteen minutes, all suddenly regain the *terra firma*, the bull again makes for the rocks. Up to this moment there had been the silence of ghosts ; and the stranger had doubted whether the spectacle were not a pageant of aerial spectres, ghostly huntsmen, ghostly lances, and a ghostly bull. But just at this crisis a voice (it was the voice of Mr. Wilson) shouted aloud, "Turn the villain ; turn that villain ; or he will take to Cumberland." The young stranger did the service required of him ; the villain was turned and fled southwards ; the hunters, lance in rest, rushed after him ; all bowed their thanks as they fled past ; the fleet cavalcade again took the high road ; they doubled the cape which shut them out of sight ; and in a moment all had disappeared, and left the quiet valley to its original silence, whilst the young stranger and two grave Westmoreland "statesmen"¹ (who by this time had come into sight upon some accident or other) stood wondering in silence, and saying to themselves, perhaps,

"The earth hath bubbles as the water hath ;
And these are of them."

¹ STATESMAN. A small landholder.—*Wright's Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English.*

But they were no bubbles : the bull was a substantial bull ; and took no harm at all from being turned out occasionally at midnight for a chase of fifteen or eighteen miles. The bull, no doubt, used to wonder at this nightly visitation ; and the owner of the bull must sometimes have pondered a little on the draggled state in which the swamps would now and then leave his beast ; but no other harm came of it.—THOMAS DE QUINCEY (*Edinburgh Literary Gazette*, quoted in the "Memoir of Wilson").

*Unusual
hunting.*

Meeting one day with a rough and unruly wayfarer, who showed inclination to pick a quarrel, concerning right of passage across a certain bridge, the fellow obstructed the way, and making himself decidedly obnoxious, Wilson lost all patience, and offered to fight him. The man made no objection to the proposal, but replied that he had better not fight with *him*, as he was so and so, mentioning the name of a (then not unknown) pugilist. This statement had, as may be supposed, no effect in damping the belligerent intentions of the Oxonian ; he knew his own strength, and his skill too. In one moment off went his coat, and he set to upon his antagonist in splendid style. The astonished and *punished* rival, on recovering from his blows and surprise, accosted him thus : "You can only be one of the two ; you are either Jack Wilson or the Devil." This encounter, no doubt, led, for a short time, to fraternity and equality over a pot of porter.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

*Chastising
a bully.*

Cock-fighting, wrestling, pugilistic contests, boat-

*Athletic
and pugilistic
habits.*

racing, horse-racing, all enjoyed Mr. Wilson's patronage ; all were occasionally honored by his personal participation. I mention this in no unfriendly spirit toward Professor Wilson ; on the contrary, these propensities grew out of his ardent temperament and his constitutional endowments—his strength, speed, and agility ; and being confined to the period of youth—for I am speaking of a period removed by five and twenty years—can do him no dishonor amongst the candid and the judicious. . . .

Even at Oxford he fought an aspiring shoemaker repeatedly, which is creditable to both sides ; . . . elsewhere he sought out, or, at least did not avoid, the most dreaded of the local heroes ; and fought his way through his "most verdant years," taking or giving defiance to the right and the left in carelessness, as chance or occasion offered. . . . These features of his character, however, and these propensities which naturally belonged to the transitional state from boyhood to manhood, would have drawn little attention on their own account, had they not been relieved and emphatically contrasted by his passion for literature, and the fluent command which he soon showed over a rich and voluptuous poetic diction.—THOMAS DE QUINCEY ("Literary Reminiscences").¹

The gardener at Elleray told me a story of the Professor. . . . He had challenged *five* potters,

¹ De Quincey (Thomas). *Literary Reminiscences*. 2 vols., 16mo. Boston, 1851.

brothers, to fight (potters are tramps) the whole of them. He led them into his sitting-room, cleared for the purpose, locked the door, put the key into his pocket, and told them to set to. One after another they were "floored" beneath his stalwart arm and "profound" science. At length one of them crawled along, entangled himself in his legs, and Wilson fell. The five set upon him together then as he lay on the floor, and would certainly have killed him, but that his servants burst in the door, and rushed to his rescue.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

Five to one.

May 14, 1828.—Amusing story told¹ of John Wilson, the Professor of Morality. . . . He had taken Mrs. Wilson, her sister, and her sister's husband, in the summer of 1824, to an inn at Bowness for the purpose of viewing the Lake district. On the morning after their arrival the gentlemen walked out, leaving the ladies at their breakfast. Suddenly the latter were most unceremoniously broken in upon by Lord M——, a young nobleman recently expelled from Christ Church, and three of his companions, one of whom was in orders. In spite of the interference of the landlady, they acted very rudely, insisting on saluting the ladies, and in the scuffle overturned the table. Having been with much difficulty induced to quit the room, they next proceeded to stroll by the margin of the magnificent piece of water in the immediate vicinity.

*Summary
chastise-
ment.*

On his return, Mr. Wilson was made acquainted by the landlady with what had occurred in his ab-

¹ At a supper-party.

*Summary
chastise-
ment.*

sence, and became, as may be supposed, violently angry. In vain did his brother-in-law and the ladies endeavor to pacify him, and as they locked the door to prevent his going in search of the intruders, he sprang through the window, and made off to the shore of the lake, where he found the party amusing themselves with throwing stones into the water. Instantly addressing them, he insisted on knowing which was Lord M——. The gentlemen at first were silent, but on his declaring, if he were not informed he should treat the person nearest as the object of his inquiry, his lordship avowed himself, and was immediately knocked down! The other three closed on the Professor; but he, being a very athletic man, as well as possessed of considerable skill in the art of boxing, soon gave the whole four a very severe drubbing, and compelled them to apologize for their improper conduct.

The next morning the clergyman, mounting a very respectable pair of black eyes, called on him, having learnt his name in the interval, and renewing his excuses, hinted that for the sake of all parties it would be better that the affair should be buried in silence. Mr. Wilson replied that he was not in the least ashamed of what *he* had done, and that if his Professor's gown had been on his back at the time, he should have had no hesitation in laying it aside on such an occasion; but that his object of inflicting a due chastisement having been accomplished, any publicity which might arise would be owing solely to their own indiscretion, as he should think no more of the matter. And thus the affair terminated.—R. H. BARHAM (Extract from "Diary").

A street-scene was described to me by a lady who saw it take place :—One summer afternoon, as she was about to sit down to dinner, her servant requested her to look out of the window, to see a man cruelly beating his horse. The sight not being a very gratifying one, she declined, and proceeded to take her seat at table. It was quite evident that the servant had discovered something more than the ill-usage of the horse to divert his attention, for he kept his eyes fixed on the window ; again suggesting to his mistress that she ought to look out. Her interest was at length excited, and she rose to see what was going on. In front of her house (Moray Place) stood a cart of coals, which the poor victim of the carter was unable to drag along. He had been beating the beast most unmercifully, when at that moment Professor Wilson, walking past, had seen the outrage and immediately interfered. The lady said, that from the expression of his face, and vehemence of his manner, the man was evidently "getting it," though she was unable to hear what was said. The carter, exasperated at this interference, took up his whip in a threatening way, as if with intent to strike the Professor. In an instant that well-nerved hand twisted it from the coarse fist of the man, as if it had been a straw, and walking quietly up to the cart he unfastened its *trams*, and hurled the whole weight of coals into the street. The rapidity with which this was done left the driver of the cart speechless. Meanwhile, poor Rosinate, freed from his burden, crept slowly away, and the Professor, still clutching the whip in one hand, and leading the horse in the other, proceeded through

*Redressing
a wrong.*

Moray Place to deposit the wretched animal in better keeping than that of its driver.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

*Winding up
a vacation.*

About a year after he had entered upon his new duties,¹ the Professor was rambling during vacation time in the south of Scotland, having for a while exchanged the gown for the old "Sporting Jacket." On his return to Edinburgh he was obliged to pass through Hawick, where, on his arrival, finding it to be a fair day, he readily availed himself of the opportunity to witness the amusements going on. These happened to include "a little mill" between two members of the local "fancy." His interest in pugilism attracted him to the spot, where he soon discovered something very wrong, and a degree of injustice being perpetrated which he could not stand. It was the work of a moment to espouse the weaker side, a proceeding which naturally drew down upon him the hostility of the opposite party. The result was to him, however, of little consequence. There was nothing for it but to beat or be beaten. He was soon "in position;" and before his unknown adversary well knew what was coming, the skilled fist of the Professor had planted such a "facer" as did not need repetition. Another "round" was not called for; and leaving the discomfited champion to recover at his leisure, the Professor walked coolly away to take his seat in the stage-coach, about to start for Edinburgh. He just reached it in time to secure a place inside, where he

¹ As Professor of Moral Philosophy.

found two young men already seated. As a matter of course he entered into conversation with them, and before the journey was half over, they had become the best friends in the world. He asked all sorts of questions about their plans and prospects, and was informed they were going to attend College during the winter session. Among the classes mentioned were Leslie's, Jackson's, Wilson's, and some others. "Oh! Wilson; he is a queer fellow, I am told; rather touched here " (pointing significantly to his head); "odd, decidedly odd." The lads, somewhat cautiously, after the manner of their country, said they had heard strange stories reported of Professor Wilson, but it was not right to believe every thing; and that they would judge for themselves when they saw him. "Quite right, lads; quite right; but I assure you I know something of the fellow myself, and I think he is a queer devil; only this very forenoon at Hawick he got into a row with a great lubberly fellow for some unknown cause of offence, and gave him such a taste of his fist as won't soon be forgotten; the whole place was ringing with the story; I wonder you did not hear of it." "Well," rejoined the lads, "we did hear something of the sort, but it seemed so incredible that a Professor of Moral Philosophy should mix himself up with disreputable quarrels at a fair, we did not believe it." Wilson looked very grave, agreed that it was a most unbecoming position for a Professor; yet he was sorry to say that having heard the whole story from an eye-witness, it was but too true. Dexterously turning the subject, he very soon banished all further discussion about the "Professor," and held the de-

*Amusing
himself, in-
cognito,
with his
future
students.*

*A friendly
ambuscade.*

*A friendly
ambuscade.*

lighted lads enchainèd in the interest of his conversation until they reached the end of the journey. On getting out of the coach, they politely asked him, as he seemed to know Edinburgh well, if he would direct them to a hotel. "With pleasure, my young friends; we shall all go to a hotel together; no doubt you are hungry and ready for dinner, and you shall dine with me." A coach was called; Wilson ordered the luggage to be placed outside, and gave directions to the driver, who in a short time pulled up at a very nice-looking house, with a small garden in front. The situation was rural, and there was so little of the aspect of a hotel about the place, that, on alighting, the lads asked once or twice, if they had come to the right place? "All right, gentlemen; walk in; leave your trunks in the lobby. I have settled with the driver, and now I shall order dinner." No time was lost, and very soon the two youths were conversing freely with their unknown friend, and enjoying themselves extremely in the satisfactory position of having thus accidentally fallen into such good company and good quarters. The deception, however, could not be kept up much longer; and, in the course of the evening, Wilson let them know where they were, telling them that they could now judge for themselves what sort of a fellow the "Professor" was.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

*A breakfast
scene.*

Without rising, he leaned back, with his chair still toward the fire, and seizing the tea-pot as if it were a sledge hammer, he poured from one cup to the other, without interrupting the stream, over-

running both cup and saucer, and partly overflowing the tea-tray. He then set the cream toward me with a carelessness which nearly overset it, and in trying to reach an egg from the centre of the table, broke two. He took no notice of his own awkwardness, but drank his cup of tea at a single draught, ate his egg in the same expeditious manner, and went on talking of the Noctes, and Lockhart, and Blackwood, as if eating his breakfast were rather a troublesome parenthesis in his conversation.—N. P. WILLIS ("Famous Persons and Places").¹

A breakfast scene.

Dr. J. W. Francis, of New York, was a guest at the Burns dinner in 1816, at which Wilson was also present. He recollects that, somewhat late in the evening, Wilson mounted on one of the tables, danced a *pas seul* among the wine-glasses and decanters (without any fracture of the crystal), and then, descending, resumed his seat with a ludicrous air of intense and philosophic gravity—as if, in fact, he had done something worthy of consideration and gratitude.—R. SHELTON MACKENZIE ("Life of Wilson").

Dancing after dinner.

Last night I supped with John Wilson, . . . a man of the most fervid temperament, fond of all stimulating things, from tragic poetry down to whiskey punch. He snuffed and smoked cigars and drank liquors, and talked in the most indescribable style. It was at the lodging of one John Gordon,

A supper in 1827.

¹ Willis (Nathaniel Parker). Famous Persons and Places. 12mo. New York : Charles Scribner, 1854.

A supper in
1827.

a young very good man from Kirkcudbright, who sometimes comes here. Daylight came on us before we parted ; indeed, it was towards three o'clock as the Professor and I walked home, smoking as we went. I had scarcely even eaten or drunk, being a privileged person, but merely enjoyed the strange volcanic eruptions of our poet's convivial genius. He is a broad sincere man of six feet, with long dishevelled flax-colored hair, and two blue eyes keen as an eagle's. Now and then he sank into a brown study, and seemed dead in the eye of law. About two o'clock he was sitting in this state smoking languidly, his nose begrimed with snuff, his face heavy and inert, when all at once flashing into existence, he inquired of John Gordon, with an irresistible air, "I hope, Mr. Gordon, you don't believe in universal damnation?"—THOMAS CARLYLE (Letter, in Froude's "Carlyle").

Politics.

Wilson was throughout his life a zealous and consistent Tory ; there is, however, a pleasant account of his superiority to party spirit, in an anonymous article in *Blackwood's Magazine*, May, 1854 : "As a proof how completely he was superior to any feeling of party where a question of literature and genius was involved, and how his kindly disposition could urge him to exertion, even under the pressure of disease, we may mention that the last occasion on which he can be said to have appeared in public, was when he left his brother's house, and, supported by a friendly arm, came up to record his vote for a political opponent, Mr. Macaulay. The last occasion on which he left his

own threshold, was when he drove out to congratulate a friend on an event, on which he believed his happiness in life was likely to depend."

I think it was the love of the beautiful in all created things that made my father admire the glossy plumage, delicate snake-like head, and noble air of game birds—the aristocracy of their species. For many months he pampered and fed no fewer than *sixty-two* of these precious bipeds in the back-green of his house. The noise made by this fearful regiment of birds beggars all description, yet, be it said, for the honor of human patience and courtesy, not a single complaint ever came from friend or neighbor.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

Noisy pets.

I remember a helpless sparrow being found lying on the door-steps, scarcely fledged, and quite unable to do for itself. It was brought into the house, and from that moment became a *protégé* of my father's. It found a lodging in his room, and ere long was perfectly domesticated, leading a life of uninterrupted peace and prosperity for nearly eleven years. It seemed quite of opinion that it was the most important occupant of the apartment, and would peck and chirp where it liked, not unfrequently nestling in the folds of its patron's waistcoat, attracted by the warmth it found there. Then with bolder stroke of familiarity, it would hop upon his shoulder, and picking off some straggling hair from the long locks hanging about his neck, would jump away to its cage. . . . The creature seemed

Love of animals.

*Love of
animals.*

positively influenced by constant association with its master. It grew in *stature* and began to assume a noble and defiant look. It was alleged, in fact, that he was gradually becoming an *eagle*. Of his dogs, their name was Legion. I remember Brontë, Rover, Fang, Paris, Charlie, Fido, Tip, and Grog, besides outsiders without number. . . . The house in Gloucester Place was a rendezvous for all kinds of dogs. My father's kindness of nature made him open his house for his four-footed friends, who were too numerous to describe.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

*Among the
poor.*

He was well known in the houses of the poor. No humble friend was ever cast aside if honest and upright. During the summer, an old servant of my mother's, who had formerly lived many years in her service, had fallen into bad health, and was ordered change of air. She was at once invited to Roslin, . . . but the change was of little service. . . . That she was considerably tended and soothed . . . was only what was to have been expected, but it was no infrequent sight to see my father, as early dawn streaked the sky, sitting by the bedside of the dying woman, arranging with gentle but awkward hand the pillow beneath her head, or cheering her with encouraging words, and reading, when she desired it, those portions of the Bible most suitable to her need.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

There is something very expressive in the words, "Little Ways." Every one has seen, in intimate in-

tercourse with his fellow-creatures, habits and peculiarities that are in themselves trifling enough, but so belonging to the person that they can be looked upon only as his "ways," and are never for an instant disputed, rather encouraged. My father had a number of these "ways," all of so playful a kind, so much proceeding from the affection of his nature, that I can scarcely think of him without them, coming, as they do, out of the heart of his domesticities, when moving about his house, preparing for the forenoon lecture, or sitting simply at home, after the labor of the day. I would not as a matter of taste introduce an ordinary toilette to the attention of the reader, but with the Professor this business was so *like himself*, so original, that some account of it will rather amuse than offend. By fits and starts the process of shaving was carried on ; walking out of his dressing-room into the study ; lathering his chin one moment with soap, then standing the next to look at some fragment of a lecture, which would absorb his attention, until the fact of being without coat, and having his face half-covered with soap, was entirely forgotten, the reverie only disturbed by a ring at the bell, when he would withdraw to proceed with the "toilette's tedious task," which, before completion, would be interrupted by various caprices, such as walking out of one room into another ; then his waistcoat was put on ; after that, perhaps he had a hunt among old letters and papers for the lecture, now lost, which a minute before he held in his hand. Off again to his dressing-room, bringing his coat along with him, and, diving into its pockets, he would find the lost lect-

*Household
ways.*

*Household
ways.*

ure, in the form of a tattered fragment of a letter, which, to keep together, he was obliged to ask his daughter to sew for him with needle and thread. . . . At last, he would get under weigh ; but the tying of his shoes and the winding-up of his watch were the finishing touches to this disjointed toilette. These little operations he never, as far as I remember, did for himself ; they were offices I often had the pleasure of performing. The watch was a great joke. In the first place, he seldom wore his own, which never by any chance was right, or treated according to the natural properties of a watch. Many wonderful escapes this ornament (if so it may be called) had from fire, water, and sudden death. All that was required of it at his hands was that it should go, and point at some given hour. His own account of its treatment is so exactly the sort of system pursued, that this little imaginative bit of writing will describe its course correctly :—" We wound up our chronometer irregularly, by fits and starts, thrice a day, perhaps, or once a week, till it fell into an intermittent fever, grew delirious, and gave up the ghost." His snuff-box, too, was a source of agony to him ; it was always lost, at least the one he wished to use. He had a curious sort of way of mislaying things ; even that broad-brimmed hat of his sometimes went amissing ; his gloves, his pocket-handkerchief, everything, just the moment he wished to be off to his class, seemed to become invisible.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

In the simple ways of his daily life, I see him as he sometimes used to be, in his own room, sur-

rounded by his family—the prestige of greatness laid aside, and the very strength of his hand softened, that he might gently caress the infant on his knee, and play with the little ones at his feet. And many a game was played with fun and frolic; stories were told, barley-sugar was eaten, and feasts of various kind given. “A party in grandpapa’s room” was ever hailed with delight. There was to be seen a tempting display of figs, cakes, cakes, and other good things, all laid out on a table set and covered by himself; while he, acting on the occasion as waiter, was ordered about in the most unceremonious fashion.—*Mrs. Gordon* (“*Memoir of Wilson*”).

Quiet pleasures.

He was, in his latter years, particularly fond of children: his grandchildren were his playmates. A favorite pastime with them was fishing in imaginary rivers and lochs, in boats and out of them; the scenery rising around the angler, with magical rapidity, for one glorious reality was there to create the whole, fishing-rod, reels and basket, line and fly—the entire gear. What shouts and screams of delight as “the fun grew fast and furious,” and fish were caught by dozens. . . . The child of six imagines himself surrounded by companions of his own age in all he sees. The grandfather is an abstract of love, good humor, and kindness. . . . Noah’s ark, trumpets, drums, pencils, puzzles, dolls, and all the delightful games of infant life are supposed to possess equal interest in his eyes. I have often seen this unwearied playmate sitting in the very heart of all these paraphernalia, taking his part according to

Games with his grandchildren.

*Games
with his
grand-
children.*

*How to
carry a
baby.*

orders given, and actually going at the request of some of these urchins up-stairs to the nursery to fetch down a forgotten toy, or on all-fours on the ground helping them to look for some lost fragment. . . . A nervous or fidgety mother would have been somewhat startled at his mode of treating babies; but I was so accustomed to all his doings that I never for a moment interfered with them. His granddaughter went through many perils. He had great pleasure in amusing himself with her long before she could either walk or speak. One day I met him coming down stairs with what appeared to be a bundle in his hands, but it was my baby which he clutched by the back of the clothes, her feet kicking through her long robe, and her little arms striking about evidently in enjoyment of the reckless position in which she was held. He said this way of carrying a child was a discovery he had made, that it was quite safe, and very good for it. . . . She was very often in his arms when he was preparing his thoughts for the lecture-hour. A pretty tableau it was to see them in that littered room, among books and papers—the only bright things in it—and the sparrow,¹ too, looking on while he hopped about the table, not quite certain whether he should not affect a little envy at the sight of the new inmate, whose chubby hands were clutching and tearing away at the long hair, which of right belonged to the audacious bird.—MRS. GORDON (“Memoir of Wilson”).

¹ One of Wilson's pets.

He gathered around him when the spring mornings brought gay jets of sunshine into the little room where he lay, the relics of a youthful passion, one that with him never grew old. It was an affecting sight to see him busy, nay, quite absorbed, with the fishing-tackle scattered about his bed, propped up with pillows—his noble head, yet glorious with its flowing locks, carefully combed by attentive hands, and falling on each side of his unfaded face. How neatly he picked out each elegantly dressed fly from its little bunch, drawing it out with trembling hand along the white coverlet, and then, replacing it in his pocket-book, he would tell ever and anon of the streams he used to fish in of old, and of the deeds he had performed in his childhood and youth. These precious relics of a bygone sport were wont to be brought out in the early spring, long before sickness confined him to his room. It had been a habit of many years, but then the “sporting jacket” was donned soon after, and angling was no more a delightful day-dream, but a reality, “that took him knee-deep, or waist-band-high, through river feeding torrents, to the glorious music of his running and ringing reel.” This outward life was at an end. With something of a prophetic spirit did he write in former days, when he affected the age he had not attained—how love for all sports would live in his heart forever: “Our spirit burns within us, but our limbs are palsied, and our feet must brush the heather no more. Lo! how beautifully those fast travelling pointers do their work on that black mountain’s breast! intersecting it into parallelograms, and squares, and circles, and now all a stoop

*“Even in
our ashes
live their
wonted
fires.”*

*"Even in
our ashes
live their
rooted
fires."*

on a sudden, as if frozen to death! Higher up among the rocks, and cliffs, and stones, we see a stripling whose ambition it is to strike the sky with his forehead, and wet his hair in the misty cloud, pursuing the ptarmigan. . . . Never shall Eld deaden our sympathies with the pastimes of our fellow-men any more than with their highest raptures, their profoundest griefs." Nor did he belie the words.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

1785-1859.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE history of literature teems with strange figures ; types of character and developments of human nature which elude analysis and classification, and which cannot be measured by ordinary standards, or judged by the rules of common experience ; men who seem astray in this world. They move fitfully in a vision-haunted twilight, and vain is every attempt to follow them through the shadows. When questioned too closely, "they make themselves air, into which they vanish," leaving the earnest seeker unsatisfied, baffled—

"The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them !"

Among such men there is none more perplexing or more fascinating than Thomas De Quincey—a veritable curiosity of literature ! It is far from easy even to suggest the manifold subtleties of the man. Epithets can but vaguely and imperfectly characterize him. To call him eccentric would be about as adequate a description as if one should say that Landor had a temper which was not uniformly equable, or that Wordsworth showed a certain measure of sympathy with external nature ! The final

result of every account of him is a confession of ignorance.

The friendship of De Quincey and Wilson is a noteworthy and significant fact. One naturally asks, what had these men in common? A stronger or more picturesque contrast than they present can hardly be imagined: Wilson is an example of the highest type of physical manhood; his gigantic body is sound from head to foot; nor is he lacking in worldly wisdom, in sagacity to guide him in his daily intercourse with men; he stands erect under the burden of social and civic responsibilities, and, despite some irregularities, his broad, active life is sane and normal. De Quincey's weak, puny body is tormented by life-long disease; to him the most ordinary events are fraught with difficulty and danger; he is the easy dupe of every beggar; the possession of a cheque fills him with helpless perplexity; around and within his life, woven into its very fibre, is the baleful, thrice-accursed spell of opium; like a bewildered waif he shuns the common paths of man, and walks apart in a dreamland of his own. An intimacy between two such men seems, at the first glance, strange and inexplicable; but a closer observation shows that it had its spring in resemblances and affinities not readily discernible at first. Like the friendship of Landor and Southey, it serves to illustrate the more hidden traits of two widely dissimilar natures, and to reveal certain qualities in both the men, which might otherwise have escaped observation.¹

¹ For a fuller consideration of this subject, see p. 238.

Few men have bestowed more labor upon their own portraits than De Quincey has done. His self-disclosures seem frank and abundant in a remarkable degree; and there are, besides, many carefully elaborated descriptions of him by those who thought they knew him; yet his essential nature remains a mystery. Notwithstanding all the records of his generosity, tenderness, paternal affection, suave and graceful courtesy, the impression he leaves upon the mind is of something wild, elfish, uncanny. So his contemporaries spoke of him. Masson calls him "the wee intellectual wizard;" Gillies says, "his voice came as if from dreamland;" Hood likens him to "the phantom in Hamlet;" the same feeling appears in almost everything written concerning him, finding its most striking expression in the words of Carlyle: "When he sate, you would have taken him by candlelight for the beautifullest little child; blue-eyed, sparkling face, had there not been a something, too, which said '*Eccovi*—this child has been in hell.'"

The chief authorities are H. A. Page's "Life of De Quincey," Professor Masson's volume in the "English Men of Letters" series, and the various autobiographical writings of De Quincey himself. Peculiarly valuable as these autobiographical writings are, it has been found impracticable to make use of them in this work; their discursiveness renders them quite unsuitable for quotation. Interesting matter will be found in Mrs. Gordon's "Memoir of John Wilson;" John Hill Burton's "Book-Hunter;" Hood's "Literary Reminiscences;" Carlyle's "Reminiscences;" Charles Knight's "Pas-

sages from a Working Life;" Charles Mackay's "Forty Years' Recollections;" and an article, by H. M. Alden, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1863.

LEADING EVENTS OF DE QUINCEY'S LIFE.

1785. Born, August 15th, at Manchester.
- 1799.—(Aged 14.) At school in Bath and in Winkfield.
- 1801.—(Aged 16.) At school in Manchester.
- 1802.—(Aged 17.) Runs away from school, and wanders in Wales.
Later in the year, suffers great privation in London.
- 1803.—(Aged 18.) (?) Enters Oxford University.
- 1804.—(Aged 19.) Begins to use opium.
- 1809.—(Aged 24.) Rents a cottage in Grasmere.
- 1816.—(Aged 31.) Marries Miss Margaret Simpson, and lives with her in Grasmere.
- 1819.—(Aged 34.) Writes for the *Quarterly Review*. Edits the *Westmoreland Gazette*.
- 1821.—(Aged 36.) In London. His family in Grasmere. Writes "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," and publishes them in the *London Magazine*.
- 1826.—(Aged 41.) Becomes a contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*.
- 1830.—(Aged 45.) Removes his family to Edinburgh.
- 1832.—(Aged 47.) Publishes "Klosterheim."
- 1837.—(Aged 52.) His wife dies.
- 1840.—(Aged 55.) Removes with his daughters to a cottage in Lasswade.
- 1859.—(Aged 74 years and 3 months.) Dies, December 8th.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

DE QUINCEY'S own writings must be consulted by those who would gain a knowledge of his youth. His "Autobiographic Sketches" and "Confessions" tell the story at great length, and with a discursiveness which renders it impossible to quote from them. Evidently he was a sensitive, excitable, and altogether abnormally precocious child, developing at a very early age many of the peculiar qualities which distinguished his maturity. At school he does not seem to have been deficient in energy, and showed some interest in school-boy games. From the first his scholarship was remarkable. He gives the following account of his knowledge of Greek :

*Childhood
and youth.*

"At thirteen, I wrote Greek with ease, and at fifteen my command of that language was so great, that I not only composed Greek verses in lyric measures, but could converse in Greek fluently, and without embarrassment—an accomplishment which I have not since met with in any scholar of my times, and which, in my case, was owing to the practice of daily reading off the newspapers into the best Greek I could furnish *extempore* ; for the necessity of ransacking my memory and invention,

*Childhood
and youth.*

for all sorts and combinations of periphrastic expressions, as equivalents for modern ideas, images, relations of things, etc., gave me a compass of diction which would never have been called out by a dull translation of moral essays, etc. 'That boy,' said one of the masters, pointing the attention of a stranger to me, 'that boy could harangue an Athenian mob, better than you or I could address an English one.'"

At Oxford.

De Quincey's life at Oxford was little in conformity with the ordinary traditions of that ancient seat of learning. . . . He came burdened with experiences, luckily not common to undergraduates. . . . Still, he studied hard, but not in the lines that lead to university honors. He could have stood an examination at any time in Greek; . . . but the ambition that is necessary to sustain set college studies had departed from him. His exceptional life during the year that had passed, and the sufferings he had undergone,¹ induced some morbidity and disinclination to associate with others; . . . he thus speaks of his early college life: "I, whose disease was to meditate too much and to observe too little, upon my first entrance on college life, was nearly falling into a deep melancholy, from brooding too much on the sufferings I had witnessed in London." . . . It was well known that Dr. Cotton, the Provost of Worcester, had

¹ Having run away from school, he had spent some time in rambling about Wales, and finally drifting to London, had lived there in imminent danger of starvation.

formed the very highest opinion of him; . . . and we here quote his testimony to personal character as well as to intellectual acquirements:—
 “During the period of his residence he was generally known as a quiet and studious man. He did not frequent wine parties, though he did not abstain from wine; and he devoted himself principally to the society of a German named Schwartzburg, who is said to have taught him Hebrew. He was remarkable even in those days for his rare conversational powers, and for his extraordinary stock of information upon every subject that was started.”
 These reports of his Oxford life tend to show that he was not so absolutely retired and isolated during his residence there as a too harsh construction of his own words . . . might lead one to infer. . . . One of his contemporaries through all the years of his residence was John Wilson, who achieved such a reputation as amounted to notoriety. . . . And it well indicates the retirement . . . in which De Quincey lived among his own dreams and interests, that he never even heard of this brilliant figure.—H. A. PAGE (“Life of De Quincey”).¹

At Oxford.

There is speculation in the eyes, a curl of the lip, and a general character in the outline, that reminds one of some portraits of Voltaire. . . . He looks, thinks, writes, talks and walks, eats and drinks, and no doubt sleeps philosophically—*i.e.*, deliberately.

Personal appearance.

¹ Page (H. A.). Thomas De Quincey: His Life and Writings. With Correspondence. 2 vols., 12mo. London and New York, 1877.

*Personal
appearance.*

There is nothing abrupt about his motions,—he goes and comes calmly and quietly—like the phantom in Hamlet, he is here—he is there—he is gone! So it is with his discourse. He speaks slowly, clearly, and with very marked emphasis,—the tide of talk flows like Denham's river, "strong without rage, without o'erflowing, full."—THOMAS HOOD ("Literary Reminiscences").¹

Picture to yourself a very diminutive man, carelessly—very carelessly—dressed; a face lined, careworn, and so expressionless that it reminded one of "that dull changeless brow, where cold Obstruction's apathy appals the gazing mourner's heart"—a face like death in life. The instant he began to speak, however, it lit up as though by electric light: this came from his marvellous eyes, brighter and more intelligent (though by fits) than I have ever seen in any other mortal.—JAMES PAYN ("Recollections," *Cornhill Magazine*, April, 1884).

Conceive a little, pale-faced, wo-begone, and attenuated man, with short indescribables, no coat, check shirt, and neckcloth twisted like a wisp of straw, opening the door of his room in — street, advancing toward you with hurried movement, and half-recognizing glance; saluting you in low and hesitating tones, asking you to be seated, and after he has taken a seat opposite you, but without looking you in the face, beginning to pour into your willing ear, a stream of learning and wisdom as long

¹ Hood (Thomas). Works. 4 vols., 12mo. New York, 1852-53.

as you are content to listen, or lend him the slightest cue. . . . His head is small, how can it carry all he knows? His brow is singular in shape, but not particularly large or prominent: where has nature expressed his majestic intellect? His eyes—they sparkle not, they shine not, they are lustreless: can that be a squint which glances over from them towards you? No, it is only a slight habit one of them has of occasionally looking in a different direction from the other; there is nothing else particular about them; there is not even the glare which lights up sometimes dull eyes into eloquence; and yet, even at first, the *tout ensemble* strikes you as that of no common man, and you say, ere he has opened his lips, "He is either mad or inspired."—GEORGE GILFILLAN ("Literary Portraits").¹

*Personal
appearance.*

One of the smallest man figures I ever saw; shaped like a pair of tongs, and hardly above five feet in all. When he sate, you would have taken him, by candlelight, for the beautifullest little child; blue-eyed, sparkling face, had there not been a something, too, which said "*Eccovi*—this child has been in hell."²—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").

It was in the autumn of 1849 that I first saw Thomas De Quincey. At that period, much of my time was taken up in connection with "Hogg's In-

*First im-
pressions of
De Quincey.*

¹ Gilfillan (George). Gallery of Literary Portraits. (First series.) London, 1845.

² For further descriptions of his appearance, see pp. 257, 258, 262.

*First im-
pressions of
De Quincey.*

structor." . . . As I was attending to some matters in this office, I was informed that a gentleman urgently wished to see me. Going down, I was confronted by a noticeably small figure, attired in a capacious garment which was much too large, and which served the purpose of both under and overcoat. Although I was well acquainted with the fame and writings of Thomas De Quincey, and had read accounts of his personal appearance, the figure now before me failed to realise the idea I had formed of the English Opium-Eater. It was some time before the extreme refinement of the face was noticed—not, indeed, till the voice, gentle, clear, and silvery, began to be heard; when the eye ceased to be diverted by a certain oddity in the general appearance, and was attracted by the brow which, from its prominence, gave an aspect of almost childish smallness to the under face, and by the eyes, which combined a singular power of quiet scrutiny with a sort of dreamy softness that suggested something of weariness.

With an air of quiet good breeding, he told me who he was, and the object of his visit, which was to offer me an article for the "Instructor." . . . I was much pleased at the offer of the services of so distinguished a writer. The contribution which he had brought with him was forthwith drawn from the capacious inner pocket of his coat; but, before being handed to me, I was both surprised and amused at a small hand-brush being drawn from the same receptacle, and the manuscript carefully brushed before it was handed to me. This operation was one which I afterwards found that he invariably per-

formed.—JAMES HOGG¹ (quoted in H. A. Page's "Life of De Quincey").

The greasy, crumpled, Scotch one-pound notes annoyed him. He did his best to smooth and cleanse them before parting with them, and he washed and polished shillings up to their pristine brightness before he gave them away.—RICHARD ROWE (quoted in H. A. Page's "Life of De Quincey").

*Money-
cleaning.*

When it was my frequent and agreeable duty to call on Mr. De Quincey, . . . and I have found him at home, quite at home, in the midst of a German Ocean of *Literature*, in a storm,—flooding all the floor, the tables and the chairs, billows of books tossing, tumbling, surging open,—on such occasions I have willingly listened by the hour whilst the Philosopher, standing, with his eyes fixed on one side of the room, seemed to be less speaking than, reading from a "handwriting on the wall." Now and then he would diverge, for a Scotch mile or two, to the right or left, till I was tempted to inquire with "Peregrine" in "John Bull," "Do you never deviate?"—but he always came safely back to the point where he had left, not lost the scent, and thence hunted his topic to the end. But look!—we are in the small hours, and a change comes o'er the spirit of that "old familiar face." A faint hectic tint leaves the cheek, the eyes are a degree

*Conversa-
tion.*

¹ This was not Hogg, the poet, but the publisher of a Scottish journal, *Hogg's Instructor*.

*Conversa-
tion.*

dimmer, and each is surrounded by a growing shadow—signs of the waning influence of that potent drug whose stupendous pleasures and enormous pains have been so eloquently described by the English Opium-Eater.—THOMAS HOOD ("Literary Reminiscences").

Very decisively he realized my plan of moving in a separate world (having no doubt realities of its own); moreover, he neither spoke nor acted in the every-day world like any one else, for which, of course, I greatly honored him. He was then (1814) in the habit of taking opium daily as an article of food, and the drug, though used for years, had scarcely begun to tell on his constitution, by those effects, which, sooner or later, overtake every one of its persevering votaries. . . . His voice was extraordinary; it came as if from dream-land; but it was the most musical and impressive of voices. In convivial life, what then seemed to me the most remarkable trait of De Quincey's character, was the power he possessed of easily changing the tone of ordinary thought and conversation into that of his own dream-land, till his auditors, with wonder, found themselves moving pleasantly along with him in a sphere of which they might have heard and read, perhaps, but which had ever appeared to them inaccessible and far, far away! Seeing that he was always good-natured and social, he could take part, at commencement, in any sort of tattle or twaddle. The talk might be of "beeves," and he could grapple with them, if expected to do so, but his musical cadences were not in keeping with such work, and

*Conversa-
tion.*

in a few minutes (not without some strictly logical sequences), he could escape at will from the bees to butterflies, and thence to the soul's immortality, to Plato, and Kant, and Schelling, and Fichte, to Milton's early years and Shakespeare's sonnets, to Wordsworth and Coleridge, to Homer and Æschylus, to St. Thomas of Aquin, St. Basil, and St. Chrysostom. But he by no means excluded them from real life, according to his own views of that life, but would recount profound mysteries from his own experiences—visions that had come over him in his loneliest walks among the mountains, and passages within his own personal knowledge, illustrating, if not proving, the doctrines of dreams, of warnings, of second sight, and mesmerism. And whatever the subject might be, every one of his sentences (or of his chapters, I might say) was woven into the most perfect logical texture, and uttered in a tone of sustained melody.—R. P. GILMAN ("Memoirs of a Literary Veteran").

He had . . . the power of drawing out anything that was in those with whom he conversed. He suggested to them new views of subjects, and enabled them to assist him, as it were, in elucidating a subject, with no small satisfaction, as you may believe, to their self-esteem.

He especially disliked controversy, as anything of the nature of strife was painful to his nature; but he liked discussion in its original sense,—to have a subject tossed about from one to another, becoming gradually better understood as each suggested some

new view. ANON. (quoted in Page's "Life of De Quincey").

*Conversa-
tion.*

He was a pretty little creature, full of wire-drawn ingenuities, bankrupt enthusiasms, bankrupt pride, with the finest silver-toned low voice, and most elaborate gently-winding courtesies and ingenuities in conversation. "What would n't one give to have him in a box, and take him out to talk!" That was Her criticism of him, and it was right good. A bright, ready, and melodious talker, but in the end an inconclusive and long-winded.¹—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").

His health.

It may be doubted whether the majority of those interested in him have had any adequate conception of that extreme fragility of body, that complexity of bodily pains and ailments, with which, even apart from the opium, he had to contend all his life. Connected with his main malady—that malady into which all his inherited or acquired ailments had coalesced and settled from an early stage of his youth, and which the medical authorities are disposed to define as "gastrodynia," or severe gastric neuralgia, accompanied by "a low inflammatory condition of the mucous coat of the stomach proceeding at times to ulceration"—there was a specific inability to live by the ordinary forms of nutriment. His teeth had gone; he "did not know what it was to eat a dinner." . . . A little soup, tea, cocoa, coffee, or other fluid, with a sop of bread, or more

¹ See also pp. 250, 251.

rarely an inch or two of mutton or hare, . . . formed De Quincey's diet. In the management even of this there was incessant cause of nervous irritation. Add the glooms and phrenzies growing out of the indulgence in opium to which he had been so long habituated.—DAVID MASSON ("Life of De Quincey").¹

Ill health.

Vast as were his acquirements, intuitive as was his appreciation of character and the motives of human actions, unembarrassed as was his demeanor, pleasant and even mirthful his table-talk, De Quincey was as helpless in every situation of responsibility as when he paced "stony-hearted Oxford Street" looking for the lost one. He was constantly beset by idle fears and vain imaginings. His sensitiveness was so extreme, in combination with the almost ultra-courtesy of a gentleman, that he hesitated to trouble a servant with any personal requests without a long prefatory apology. My family were in the country in the summer of 1825, when he was staying at my house in Pall Mall, East. A friend or two had met him at dinner, and I had walked part of the way home with one of them. When I returned, I tapped at his chamber door to bid him good-night. He was sitting at the open window habited as a prize-fighter when he enters the ring. "You will take cold," I exclaimed. "Where is your shirt?" "I have not a shirt—my shirts are unwashed." "But why not tell the ser-

Sensitive and impractical nature.

¹ Masson (David). De Quincey. (English Men of Letters. Edited by J. Morley.) 12mo. London and New York, 1882.

vant to send them to the laundress?" "Ah! how could I presume to do that in Mrs. Knight's absence?"

*Sensitive
and un-
practical
nature.*

One more illustration of the eccentricity of De Quincey. I had been to Windsor; on my return I was told that Mr. De Quincey had taken his box away, leaving word that he was going home. I knew that he was waiting for a remittance from his mother, which would satisfy some clamorous creditors, and enable him to rejoin his family at Grasmere. Two or three days after I heard that he was still in town. I obtained a clue to his lodging, and found him in a miserable place on the Surrey side of Waterloo Bridge. He had received a large draft on a London banker at twenty-one days' sight. He summoned courage to go to Lombard Street, and was astonished to learn that he could not obtain the amount till the draft became due. A man of less sensitive feelings would have returned to Pall Mall, East, and have there waited securely and comfortably till I came. How to frame his apology to our trusty domestic was the difficulty that sent him into the den where I found him. He produced the draft to me from out his Bible, which he thought was the best hiding-place. "Come to me to-morrow morning and I will give you the cash." "What? How? Can such a thing be possible? Can the amount be got before the draft is due?" "Never fear: come you, and then get home as fast as you can."—CHARLES KNIGHT ("Passages of a Working Life").¹

*Needless
alarm.*

¹ Knight (Charles). *Passages of a Working Life during Half a Century*. 3 vols., 8vo. London, 1864-65.

Lord Cranbrook, in an article entitled "Christopher North," in the *National Review*, April, 1884, tells the following story, as told to him by Professor Wilson in 1843: "I remember well . . . calling upon him one day and finding him—he is by the way a very small man, not taller than Hartley Coleridge—wrapped in a sort of grey watchman's coat, evidently made for a man four times his size, and bought probably at a pawnbroker's shop. He began conversing earnestly and declaiming on the transcendental philosophy, when in the vehemence of his discourse the coat opened, and I saw that he had nothing else on of any description whatever. He observed it and said, 'You may see I am not dressed.' 'I did see it,' I said. He replied that he thought it not of any consequence, in which I acquiesced; he folded it round him and went on as before."

*A simple
costume.*

As I took my leave, after a most enjoyable interview, to meet the coach, I asked him whether he ever came by it into Edinburgh. "What!" he answered, in a tone of extreme surprise; "by coach? Certainly not." I was not aware of his peculiarities; the association of commonplace people and their pointless observations were intolerable to him. They did not bore him in the ordinary sense, but seemed as it were to outrage his mind. . . . "Some years ago," he said, "I was standing on the pier at Tarbet, on Loch Lomond, waiting for the steamer. A stout old lady joined me; I felt that she would presently address me, and she did. Pointing to the smoke of the steamer, which was making itself

*The perils
of travel.*

*The perils
of travel.*

seen above the next headland, 'There she comes,' she said; 'La, sir, if you and I had seen that fifty years ago, how wonderful we should have thought it!' Now the same sort of thing," added my host with a shiver, "might happen to me any day, and that is why I always avoid a public conveyance."—JAMES PAYN ("Recollections," *Cornhill Magazine*, April, 1884).

*Dread of
cheques.*

The underlying sense of his own helplessness in practical matters was sometimes brought out with a peculiar mixture of the pathetic and the humorous. He did not care for receiving large sums of money at once—preferring it in small sums as he required them; and he was positively put about by having anything to do with cheques. On one occasion when I had given him a cheque for £30, to balance his account to a particular date, he put the cheque into one or other of his pockets and went away. In a short time he returned, in great concern, saying that he must have dropped it, vigorously reperforming the labor of search as he spoke, by turning his pockets inside out. I said to him, "It doesn't matter, I shall at once send over to the bank and stop payment"—on which assurance he looked greatly relieved, and went away. But in a few minutes he returned again to tell me, that, after all, he had found it at the bottom of that capacious side-pocket of his coat; . . . and he urged me to take back the cheque, and give him a portion of the sum in cash—the remainder to be paid to him as he required it.—JAMES HOGG (quoted in Page's "Life of De Quincey").

Often in conversation with him you were seized with doubt whether he was not hoaxing you and hoaxing himself at the same time, so absurd were many of the propositions propounded with an air of gravity and assurance of conviction unparalleled. Such projects were so deliberately referred to again and again, that, though at first you humored him by a kindly acquiescence, feeling that they were mere dreams and half hoaxes, yet a certain element of seriousness arose from the very persistency with which he pursued them.—JAMES HOGG (quoted in Page's "Life of De Quincey").

*Extrava-
gant
whims.*

It has been noticed by others that, notwithstanding his apparent fragility of frame, he was wiry, and able to undergo a good deal of physical fatigue. Indeed, he was a first-rate pedestrian, and kept himself well in exercise. He considered that fourteen miles a day was necessary for his health. . . . Even at seventy years of age, he was active and vigorous, and easily out-walked me, though I was a much younger man. I remember on one occasion, when visiting him at Lasswade, on a particularly hot day in midsummer, I proposed that he should accompany me to the house of an old friend, a paper-maker in the vicinity. . . . On returning from our visit, there was between us and Lasswade a steep hill, which De Quincey ascended like a squirrel. I found myself at the top quite exhausted, while he had all along kept up an unremitting monologue on the Beauties of Herder—that being the particular subject which he had then in hand. On my remarking on my own condition, he smiled, and

*Pedestrian-
ism.*

*Pedestrian-
ism.*

at once set off on a disquisition on the evils of city life as opposed to the freedom of rural life, as affecting physical condition.—JAMES HOGG (quoted in Page's "Life of De Quincey").

*Sociable
and fun-
loving.*

Nothing, indeed, could be further from a true criticism of De Quincey than to speak of him as habitually grave, shy, and bookish, and so given up to speculative and half morbid brooding, as to have no liking for the freer play of the social feelings. His case, indeed, was the very opposite. One of the most striking things about him was this—that a man who seemed to have, in many ways, added to a natural predisposition to solitude, artificial bars to cheerful and lively social intercourse, was yet, among congenial companions, the freest and most spontaneous. He even confesses to a childish love of fun, of pure nonsense. "Both Lamb and myself," he says, "had a furious love for nonsense—headlong nonsense. Excepting Professor Wilson, I have known nobody who had the same passion to the same extent."—H. A. PAGE ("Life of De Quincey").

*The grounds
of his in-
timacy with
Wilson.*

The life-long friendship between Wilson and De Quincey could hardly have maintained its close and intimate character, if both had not possessed qualities which are not popularly accorded to them. Wilson is too much regarded as the boon companion—blessed above most men with animal spirits, the rollicking creator of the "*Noctes Ambrosianæ*," *par excellence*; De Quincey too much as the dreamer of the "Confessions" and "Suspiria." The two

nevertheless had much in common ; and their meeting points, in one respect, were the extreme developments of the tendencies not commonly attributed to them. Wilson had a vein of dreamy, pastoral, meditative melancholy, as is abundantly seen in his poems, "The Isle of Palms" more especially : . . . while De Quincey's humor, drollery, and effervescent wit—shining the brighter by reaction from the habitual reverie to which he was tempted—indicate rich sympathies, and capabilities of entering into the ways of simple and untutored natures, and conciliating them. Over and above these things, and bringing, as it were, their divergent aspects into harmony, was an innocent Bohemian propensity. . . . What we mean simply is, that both men, along with a remarkable purity and elevation of moral character, allied to the finest sensibilities, loved to be singular—to run somewhat aslant the ordinary conventionalities of life.—II. A. PAGE ("Life of De Quincey").

*The grounds
of his in-
timacy with
Wilson.*

De Quincey was very abstemious—a man of the simplest tastes—as I had ample opportunities of observing during the years that I was associated with him. Often have I heard him descant upon the beneficial properties of little delicacies that friends had sent to him—frequently things so utterly simple that most people would not have deemed them worthy of remark—a pot of black-currant jam, or even a pea-flour *scone*, calling forth many words of grateful appreciation. As a stimulant, he preferred a particular preparation of brandy ; and his maximum allowance of this during an evening on

*Simple
tastes.*

Simple tastes.

extraordinary occasions, when we would discuss at length, say, the *Coming History of England*,¹ the Indian Mutiny, the Chinese War, or the latest notorious murder, was measured in a manner peculiar to himself—*two wine-glasses two-thirds full*.—JAMES HOGG (quoted in H. A. Page's "Life of De Quincey").

Music.

Music he spoke of as a "necessity" to his daily life. If ever again he visited London, it was his hope to frequent the opera. . . . Fond as he was of music, he was not often in the room while the two younger of his daughters played or sang during my stay; but he was a good listener, for all that, in his "den" downstairs, and would comment on his favorites among their pieces when he rejoined us. Devout was his reverence for Beethoven, who alone, I used to think, . . . was capable of setting his dream fugues to music.—FRANCIS JACOX (quoted in Page's "Life of De Quincey").

The theatre.

As to the theatres, he felt no kind of attraction in anything they could promise him. The idea of seeing "Lear" on the stage, environed by the surroundings of mere pleasure-seekers and frivolous play-goers, seemed to him profanity outright.²—

¹ De Quincey intended to write a philosophical History of England.

² This was in 1852, near the close of De Quincey's life. Mr. Jacox also mentions his warm praise of some of the players whom he had seen in other years—proving that he had once derived much pleasure from theatrical performances.

FRANCIS JACOX (quoted in Page's "Life of De Quincey").

His tastes were very simple, though a little troublesome, at least to the servant who prepared his repast. Coffee, boiled rice and milk, and a piece of mutton from the loin, were the materials that invariably formed his diet. The cook, who had an audience with him daily, received her instructions in silent awe, quite overpowered by his manner; for, had he been addressing a duchess, he could scarcely have spoken with more deference. He would couch his request in such terms as these:—"Owing to dyspepsia afflicting my system, and the possibility of any additional derangement of the stomach taking place, consequences incalculably distressing would arise, so much so indeed as to increase nervous irritation, and prevent me from attending to matters of overwhelming importance, if you do not remember to cut the mutton in a diagonal rather than in a longitudinal form."—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

*Diet—
economy.*

My father's unfailing courtesy has been pleasantly noticed . . . in the "Baltimore American" by Mr. Oliver White. . . .

Courtesy.

"There was a few moments' pause in the 'table-talk,' when one of the daughters asked us our opinion of Scotland and the Scotch. De Quincey had been in a kind of reverie, from which the question aroused him. Turning to us, he said in a kindly, half-paternal manner, 'The servant that waits at my table is a Scotch girl. It may be that you have

Courtesy.

something severe to say about Scotland. . . . Heaven knows that the lot of a poor serving-girl is hard enough, and if there is any person in the world of whose feelings I am especially tender, it is of those of a female compelled to do for us our drudgery. Speak as freely as you choose, but please reserve your censure, if you have any, for the moments when she is absent from the room.'"

Awful like language.

On some occasions, however, we used to think, with some little amusement, this courtesy was not always appreciated, as in the case of an ignorant young girl just out of her village home, who, after a short time, left us for no assigned reason, but, on being questioned, confessed she was "feared o' Mr. De Quincey, he used such awfu' like language"—the awfu' like language being his gentle and quite needless explanations of why he wanted a scuttle of coals or a cup of coffee, which were given in language to which she certainly was not accustomed. To balance this, there was offered on one occasion by an admirer in the same condition of life, the following tribute: "Ah, Mr. De Quincey, you are a great man, a very great man; *no* body can understand you!"—MRS. BAIRD SMITH (quoted in Page's "Life of De Quincey").

Courteous to all.

Mr. De Quincey's whole manner and speech were imbued with as much high-bred courtesy as I ever met with; and this was not a habit put on for ceremonious occasions, but was especially remarkable in his intercourse with servants or with any chance laborer he might meet on the road.—ANON. (quoted in Page's "Life of De Quincey").

Just before he died, he looked around the room, and said very tenderly to the nurse, the physician, and his daughters, who were present, "Thank you, —thank you all!" Sensible thus to the last of kindness, he breathed out his life in simple thanks, swayed even in death by the spirit of profound courtesy that had ruled his life.—HENRY M. ALDEN (*Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1863).

*Courteous
to all.*

The year 1844 was notable for several reasons. . . . Amid the pressure of accumulated cares he had so relapsed that he had once more reached something like five thousand drops of laudanum per day. . . . He now began to experience certain phases of nervous suffering in a more intense form than ever. He thought he now traced them directly to the opium, which he had always hitherto held to have modified or lessened certain acute and recurrent symptoms. His jottings and memoranda during this period show that he possessed more strength of will and self-control than he is usually credited with, else assuredly he must now have succumbed. Having convinced himself of the curse that excessive opium indulgence had been to him, he once more set himself resolutely to subdue it. . . . Mrs. Baird Smith says of this period :—"In June of that year (1844) he brought it down to six grains, and with the most signal benefit. I would not say by any means that he never exceeded this afterwards, but I am very sure he never much exceeded it after he had convinced himself that anything in excess of it caused much of his nervous suffering." There is no record of any such struggles

*Struggles
against
opium.*

*Struggles
against
opium.*

as those of 1844 at a later date, though in 1848 we find that he made an attempt to abstain totally. The relief he had found, after a period of agony, from the reduction of 1844, it doubtless was that led him to such an experiment; but opium had laid too terrible a spell upon him to be lightly shaken off forever. Say, rather, the chronic weakness or neuralgiac affection of the stomach was so established, that this was more than could be reasonably hoped for. . . . After having at this time abstained wholly for sixty-one days, he was compelled to return to its moderate use, as life was found to be insupportable; he himself recording afterwards that he resumed its use, on the warrant of his deliberate judgment, as the least of two evils; and there is no farther record of any attempt at total abstinence. His indulgences in opium after this date were, however, very limited.—H. A. PAGE ("Life of De Quincey").

*Comparative
free-
dom.*

As bearing on the point of a decisive escape from the excess of opium, we may be allowed here to present the reminiscences of one who was not a casual, but a constant and trusted visitor during the greater portion of the Lasswade life, and whose interest in Mr. De Quincey and the family became closer as time went on:

"Few seem to be aware that Mr. De Quincey almost entirely overcame his craving for opium, and enjoyed an old age of quiet and repose, which contrasted in the most marked manner with the difficulties and the struggles of his earlier life. . . . With what a struggle the excessive opium habit was

conquered, it is difficult even to conceive. With a weak constitution, shattered nerves, and a depth of depression which constantly suggested suicide, it required no little strength of will to refrain from an indulgence which promised him at all events temporary relief. Of such constitutions, one may well say with Burns :

‘We know not what’s resisted.’”

—H. A. PAGE (“Life of De Quincey”).

Although shy and sensitive in the extreme, shrinking from contact with artificial life in all its forms, he was remarkably fearless. His love of night-wandering might be taken to prove this, no less than his liking, that lay near to his innocently Bohemian propensity, for new surroundings. . . .

Mrs. Baird Smith very well says :—“There was one feature of my father’s character which deserves to be pointed out—this was the demand for the excitement of fear. This used to account to us for a great many of his curious habits, and his exaggerated difficulties about petty matters. He was quite incapable of fear in the real sense of the word, so much so that he could not understand it in us as children or young people ; and when he was chilling our marrow with awesome stories of ghosts, murders, and mysteries, he only thought he was producing a luxurious excitement, though I can safely say that I have never conquered the eerie terrors of those times.”—H. A. PAGE (“Life of De Quincey”).

Comparative freedom.

Fearless, yet fear-loving.

His readiness to befriend others in those years

Liberality.

from 1808 to 1820 was pursued even to the point of madness and self-ruin. Losses did not teach him customary prudence. Failures of business firms involving great sacrifices of his capital, did not make him slower to aid his friends. Indeed, it may be said that at this period, as afterwards, he did not have a friend who was not welcome to his purse; and letters on letters before us bear this out, though we are hardly free to print them. Loans of large sums were given in many instances, some of which were honorably repaid, some not.—H. A. PAGE (“Life of De Quincey”).

*Generosity
to
Coleridge.*

What is of especial importance in De Quincey's biography . . . at this time of the close of his residence at Oxford,¹ is that he is found then indubitably in possession of a good deal of money. How this had come about we are not informed; but as he had attained his majority in 1806, we are to fancy either that he had been put at comparative ease by becoming master of his own funds, or that there had been some new and enlarged transaction with the Jews. . . . The profound dejection of Coleridge, the state of “cheerless despondency” into which he had fallen, . . . had struck his young friend; and having ascertained by inquiries that the main immediate cause was hopeless distress in money matters, De Quincey had been in private communication with Cottle, the Bristol bookseller, on the subject. He wanted to give Coleridge 500*l.*, a sum which all Cottle's representations, with questions whether he

¹ In 1807, probably.

was serious, whether he could afford it, whether he was of age, etc., could not persuade him to reduce below 300*l*. That sum Coleridge did accept, having been told nothing more by Cottle at the time than that "a young man of fortune who admired his talents" wanted to make him a present. Coleridge's formal receipt for the money . . . is dated November 12, 1807.¹—DAVID MASSON ("Life of De Quincey").

*Generosity
to
Coleridge.*

I remember his coming to Gloucester Place² one stormy night. He remained hour after hour, in vain expectation that the waters would assuage and the hurly-burly cease. There was nothing for it but that our visitor should remain all night. The Professor ordered a room to be prepared for him, and they found each other such good company that this accidental detention was prolonged, without further difficulty, for the greater part of *a year*. During this visit some of his eccentricities did not escape observation. For example, he rarely appeared at the family meals, preferring to dine in his own room at his own hour, not unfrequently turning night into day.

*A visit to
a friend.*

The time when he was most brilliant was generally toward the early morning hours; and then, more than once, my father arranged his supper parties so

¹ De Quincey had met Coleridge, whom he had long desired to know, for the first time in the summer of 1807—less than three months before this practical demonstration of his esteem. A full and very interesting account of the whole transaction may be found in Joseph Cottle's *Reminiscences of Southey and Coleridge*.

² The residence of Professor Wilson.

*A visit to
a friend.*

that, sitting till three or four in the morning, he brought Mr. De Quincey to that point at which in charm and power of conversation he was so truly wonderful.—MRS. GORDON ("Memoir of Wilson").

*Christopher
North's ac-
count of De
Quincey's
visit.*

An account of this same visit, by Wilson himself, has recently appeared. In the *National Review* of April, 1884, there is an article entitled "Christopher North," by Lord Cranbrook. This article consists of Lord Cranbrook's notes of a conversation which he had with Wilson in 1843 : the notes having been made at the time of the interview. Wilson said : " I was very intimate with, and believe I am now more intimate with him than any other person, and yet I hardly ever see him. I know where he lives, but hardly ever see him ; I have not seen him above four times in six years (if I remember rightly), and yet his family ask tidings of him from me. Since he has left this part of the world ¹ he has lived in different places in Scotland ; some years in Edinburgh, then in Glasgow, and so on as caprice takes him. He is never seen by anyone, as he never leaves his garret except at night, and I well remember there was a kind of mysterious awe when he remained for about a year in my house. The servants placed food for him, which would be untouched so long that they had to prepare other, and then would perhaps see a long bony hand thrust out to take it, and that was all. The only time when he himself was seen was sometimes when we had a late party, and then towards midnight he would be observed stealing out to take his walk."

¹ The Lake Country of England, where this interview occurred.

He was a Liberal by his sympathies, though a Tory in name. What he revolted against in ultra-Liberalism was its early alliance with a utilitarian and purely material purpose. This is a point which has been so well put by a very able writer that we cannot do better than quote his words here :—

“He was, in fact, a Tory from the spiritual and ideal side of Toryism ; and during the rude material struggle of those early years, this aspect of the creed was necessarily much out of sight. Latterly, however, and immediately after the Reform Bill, he became a Tory of the strictest sect. But this was rather because he revolted from the unimaginative and utilitarian character of Radicalism than because he approved the whole practical policy of the Tories. He was in many respects a Liberal in the truest sense of the word. He was ready to challenge all comers, to investigate all problems, to hold up every truth to the light.”—H. A. PAGE (“Life of De Quincey”).

In politics, in the party sense of that term, he would probably have been classed as a Liberal Conservative or Conservative Liberal—at one period of his life perhaps the former, and at a later the latter. Originally . . . his surroundings were somewhat aristocratic, in his middle life his associates, notably Wordsworth, Southey, and Wilson, were all Tories ; but he seems never to have held the extreme and narrow views of that circle. . . . As he advanced in years his views became more and more liberal, but he was always as far removed from Radicalism as from Toryism, and may be described

Politics.

as a philosophical politician, capable of classification under no definite party name or color.—J. R. FINDLAY ("Encyclopædia Britannica," edition of 1878).

A breach of hospitality.

There is one aspect of De Quincey's character, which it would be pleasant to leave unnoted. He was guilty of the impropriety—if a stronger word should not rather be used—of describing, with free and often caustic criticism, the persons and the household ways of men under whose roofs he had been a welcome guest. There are many passages in his "Literary Reminiscences," which are not agreeable reading, when one considers that those of whom he speaks were his friendly hosts. The most lenient judgment can hardly acquit him of this charge. Carlyle, in his "Reminiscences," tells of Southey's fiery wrath, upon the publication of one of these essays, having Coleridge for its subject: "'I have told Hartley Coleridge,' said he, 'that he ought to take a strong cudgel, proceed straight to Edinburgh, and give De Quincey, publicly in the streets there, a sound beating, as a calumniator, cowardly spy, traitor, base betrayer of the hospitable hearth!'"¹ Two of his contemporaries have recorded that he could be bitter with his tongue as well as with his pen. Professor Masson says:

¹ In Lord Cranbrook's notes of a conversation, in 1843, with John Wilson, published in the *National Review*, April, 1884, Wilson is reported as having said of De Quincey: "He behaved ill when he left Westmoreland, and wrote very bitter papers against Wordsworth, . . . and in them most improperly introduced my name, parenthetically, 'and Professor Wilson says the same,' when I had never said anything of the sort."

"He had a very considerable fund of prejudice, temper, opinionativeness, animosity, pugnacity, on which he could draw when he liked ; and sharp enough claws could be put forth from underneath the velvet." And says Harriet Martineau, in her "Biographical Sketches:"¹

"It was a strange thing to look upon that fragile form, and features which might be those of a dying man, and to hear such utterances as his : now the strangest comments and insignificant incidents ; now pregnant remarks on great subjects ; and then malignant gossip, virulent and base, but delivered with an air and a voice of philosophical calmness and intellectual commentary such as caused the disgust of the listener to be largely qualified with amusement and surprise."

Bitterness.

My father's love of children, and power of winning their confidence, was one of his loveliest characteristics. . . . As a girl between ten and twelve, I was his constant and almost only companion, and was never so happy as with him. The unfailing gentleness of his temper, and tender attention to the feeblest of girlish thoughts and interests, the unconscious way to both of us in which he turned these into high meanings, without overshooting the power of the child, was one of those wonderful and gracious gifts, like his power of conversation, which it was as impossible to catch and

A daughter's reminiscences.

¹ Martineau (Harriet). Biographical Sketches. 8vo. London, 1869.

A daughter's reminiscences.

bottle for future use, as it would have been to have bottled the sunshine of those days.

This humbling himself without effort or any appearance of condescension to little children, was not confined to his own children, nor, with all his delicate refinement, to the children of any class; the most nefarious of babies in the arms of the most impossible of mothers was a sure passport to, it might often be, his last shilling. And nearly the last time we were together, his almost constant companion for some time every day was the nephew of one of our maids, a child of about four, who, solely for the pleasure of conversation, walked round and round a dull little garden with him. Of this boy I remember one story which amused us. He had asked my father, "What d' ye ca' thon tree?" To which my father, with the careful consideration which he gave to any question, began, "I am not sure, my dear, but I think it may be a *Lauristinus*;" when the child interrupted him with some scorn, "A *Lauristinus*! Lad, d' ye no ken a rhododendron?" The "lad" must have been about seventy at the time.

My father's habits were simple, almost to asceticism. From the neuralgic suffering, which led to his first taking opium, he early lost all his teeth; and from the extreme delicacy of his system, he could eat nothing less capable of perfect mastication than bread, so that only too often a little soup or coffee was his entire dinner. He was able to take very little wine, even according to the standard of the present day. His dress, unfortunately, he neither cared for himself, nor would he let others care for it. I say unfortunately, because this carelessness

gave rise among punctilious people, unaccustomed to eccentric habits, to an impression of poverty for which there was no foundation. It might be that a thought occurred to him in the midst of some of his irregular processes of dressing or undressing (I should say, some thought generally did strike him at that time), and he would stop with his coat just taken off or not put on, without stockings at all, or with one off and one on, and becoming lost in what grew out of this thought, he would work on for hours, hardly even noticing the coffee, which was his chief support at such times. In the midst of this absorbing work, would arrive visitors, of whom there were many, probably from such a distance that they could not be turned back without sight of the object of their long pilgrimage ; upon which my father, with the unaffected courtesy which was one of the great charms of his character, would appear at once, rather than keep them waiting while he put on the other stocking, or whatever might be wanting, or, which was just as likely, in the wrong place, giving rise to awed impressions of poverty with some, while those who could withdraw their unaccustomed eyes from the nakedness of the land, as expounded by his feet, might have seen in his surroundings such signs of scrupulous neatness, sufficient comfort and refinement, as must have reassured them on this point. For, not long after my mother's death, my father, feeling his own singular incapacity for the management either of a household or of young children, . . . had consented to give up to the management of his oldest daughter, still but a girl, a small fixed income. . . .

A daughter's reminiscences.

A daughter's reminiscences.

From this time I believe he had no fresh difficulties to hamper him ; those which remained being rather the remnants of previous mismanagement, the growth of two phases of extravagance. . . . From the first of these phases, which can only be described as a wanton charity, no doubt he did gain some comfort. . . . His presence at home was the signal for a crowd of beggars, among whom borrowed babies and drunken old women were sure of the largest share of his sympathy ; but he refused it to none, and he was often wearied by the necessity he laid upon himself of listening to all the woes which were heaped upon him. . . .

His other extravagance grew out of the morbid value he set upon his papers and their not being disturbed. He was in the habit of accumulating these till, according to his own description, he was "snowed up," which meant, when matters came to such an extremity that there was not a square inch of room on the table to set a cup upon, that there was no possibility of making his bed for the weight of papers gathered there, that there was no chair which could be used for its legitimate purpose, and that the track from the door to the fireplace, which had always to be considered, had been blotted out, even for his own careful treading ; then he locked the door upon this impracticable state of things, and turned elsewhere ; leaving his landlady, if simple and honest, fearfully impressed with the mysterious sin of meddling with his papers ; but, if dishonest, with such a handle for playing upon his morbid anxieties, as was a source of livelihood. At his death there were, I believe, about six places

where he had these deposits, it may be imagined at what expense. Such a thing has been known as his gradually in this way "papering" his family out of a house, but in later years his daughters in the home at Lasswade were wary, and the smallest deposit of papers was carefully handed down into the one irrecoverable desert in which he worked. . . .

He was not a reassuring man for nervous people to live with, as those nights were exceptions on which he didn't set something on fire, the commonest incident being for some one to look up from work or book to say casually, "Papa, your hair is on fire," of which a calm, "Is it, my love?" and a hand rubbing out the blaze was all the notice taken. One evening a maid rushed in upon two quiet girls with a horrified face and in a burst of smoke to announce that Mr. De Quincey's room, by this time on the point of being "snowed up," was on fire. Some important papers and a little money were secured, and then they descended to the scene of action to find that a hard frost had taken away all chance of help from water; but the Mississippi might have flowed past his door, and Mr. De Quincey would have had none of it, as it would have ruined the beloved papers. He therefore determined to conquer the fire without water, or to perish with them. All he would take in was a heavy rug; and he locked the door in dread of the abhorred water being poured in, in spite of the injury the fire might cause. Presently we were assured that all danger was over, though in the presence of occasional bursts of smoke, and a very strong smell of fire, it argued an extraordinary confidence in his power of manœuvring

A daughter's reminiscences.

with that dread element that we all went to bed and slept.—MRS. BAIRD SMITH (quoted in H. A. Page's "Life of De Quincey").

*An unusual
beverage.*

The announcement of luncheon was perhaps for the first time in my young life unwelcome to me. Miss De Quincey did the honors with gracious hospitality, pleased, I think, to find that her father had so rapt a listener. I was asked what wine I would take, and not caring which it was, I was about to pour myself out a glass from the decanter which stood next to me. "You must not take that," whispered my hostess, "it is not port wine, as you think." It was in fact laudanum, to which De Quincey presently helped himself with the greatest sang-froid. . . . The liquor seemed to stimulate rather than dull his intellect.—JAMES PAYN ("Recollections," *Cornhill Magazine*, April, 1884).

*Odd hospi-
tality—two
sights of De
Quincey.*

Who in Edinburgh, or anywhere else, would not have delighted in the prospect of getting the Opium-Eater to his house, to dinner with a few friends, or more quietly afterwards, so as to have an evening with him? Nothing was easier if you knew the way. To invite him by note or personally was of no use. He would promise—promise most punctually, and, if he saw you doubted, reassure you with a dissertation on the beauty of punctuality; but when the time came, and you were all met, a hundred to one you were without your De Quincey. But send a cab for him, and some one in it to fetch him, and he came meekly, unresistingly, as if it were his doom, and he conceived it appointed that, in

case of resistance, he should be carried out by the nape of the neck. It was no compliment to *you*. Anybody might have taken possession of him, unless by inadvertence time had been given him to escape by the back-window, under pretext of dressing. . . .

The first time I saw him was, most pleasantly, one evening in a room high up in one of the tall houses of the Old Town. He came in charge of a strong, determined man, who took all the necessary trouble. There were but a few present, and all went on nicely. In addition to the general impression of his diminutiveness and fragility, one was struck with the peculiar beauty of his head and forehead, rising disproportionately high over his small, wrinkly visage and gentle, deep-set eyes. In his talk, which was in the form of really harmonious and considerate colloquy, and not at all in that of monologue, I remember chiefly two incidents. The birthday of some one present being mentioned, De Quincey immediately said, "Oh, that is the anniversary of the battle of so-and-so," and he seemed ready to catch as many birthdays as might be thrown him on the spot, and almanac them all round in a similar manner from his memory. The other incident was his use of a phrase very beautiful in itself, and which seemed characteristic of his manner of thinking. Describing some visionary scene or other, he spoke of it as consisting of "discs of light, and interspaces of gloom," and I noticed that, with all the fine distinctness of the phrase, both optical and musical, it came from him with no sort of consciousness of its being out-of-the-way in talk,

Odd hospitality—two sights of De Quincey.

Memory—felicity of phrase.

and with no reference whatever to its being appreciated or not by those around him, but simply because, whoever might be listening, he would be thinking like De Quincey.' That evening passed, and though I saw him once or twice again, it is the last sight that I remember next best. It must have been, I think in 1846, on a summer afternoon. A friend, a stranger in Edinburgh, was walking with me in one of the pleasant, quiet, country lanes near Edinburgh. Meeting us, and the sole moving thing in the lane besides ourselves, came a small figure, not untidily dressed, but with his hat pushed far up in front over his forehead, and hanging on his hind-head, so that the back rim must have been resting on his coat collar. At a little distance I recognized it to be De Quincey; but, not considering myself entitled to interrupt his meditations, I only whispered the information to my friend, that he might not miss what the look at such a celebrity was worth. So we passed him, giving him the wall. Not unnaturally, however, after he passed, we turned round for the pleasure of a back view of the wee intellectual wizard. Whether my whisper and our

*A passing
glimpse.*

¹ Another example of language decidedly "out-of-the-way in talk" is given in a foot-note in H. A. Page's *Life of De Quincey*. Mr. James T. Fields was told by De Quincey of a row in the theatre between Christopher North and a Frenchman. "The Frenchman was demonstrative, and attracted attention, so North told him to be quiet, and as soon as they got outside they would 'settle it.' 'Yes,' said Mr. Fields, 'and what then?' 'Then,' returned De Quincey, gazing vaguely into the distance, 'the Professor closed both the little Frenchman's eyes, and, his vision being eliminated, the conflict ended.'"

glances had alarmed him, as a ticket-of-leave man might be rendered uneasy in his solitary walk by the scrutiny of two passing strangers, or whether he had some recollection of me (which was likely enough as he seemed to forget nothing), I do not know ; but we found that he, too, had stopped, and was looking round at us. Apparently scared at being caught doing so, he immediately wheeled round again, and hurried his pace toward a side-turning in the lane, into which he disappeared, his hat still hanging on the back of his head. That was my last sight of De Quincey.—DAVID MASSON ("Life of De Quincey").

*A passing
glimpse.*

His manner to his three daughters . . . was the perfection of chivalric respect as well as affection. Very noticeable was his unfailing habit of turning courteously to them and explaining, in his own choicely finished and graphic diction, any casually employed term from the "dead languages," which presumably might lie outside the pale of ladies' lore.

*Life in his
later years.*

During the days that I was his guest, I could not but take note of the vicissitudes of temperament and spirits to which he was subject. For some time in the morning of each day he appeared to be grievously depressed and prostrated ; the drowsy torpor of which he complained so keenly was then in fullest possession of him. . . . A walk in the fresh air would by degrees revive him ; but nothing could I observe so effectual to refresh and reinvigorate him, no spell so potent to disperse his languor, as a cup of good coffee. I have seen it act upon him like a

*Life in his
later years.*

charm, bracing up his energies, clearing up his prospects, accelerating his speech as well as the march of his ideas, and inspiring him with a new flood of that eloquence which held the listener rapt, yet swayed him to and fro at its own sweet will. The eye that had been so heavy, so clouded, so filmy, so all but closed—the eye that had looked so void of life and significance, that had no speculation in it, nothing but a weary look of uttermost lassitude and dejection—now kindled with lambent fire, sparkled with generous animation, twinkled with quiet fun. The attenuated frame seemed to expand, and the face, if still pallid, revealed new capacities of spiritual expression, the most noteworthy a dreamy far-off look, as though holding communion with mysteries beyond our ken, with realities behind the veil. . . .

Short-sightedness.

As I walked with him along Princes Street to the Mound on his way home . . . he spoke of his short-sightedness, which at Oxford had been so marked, that he was rumored to be a bit of a Jacobin because he failed to “cap” the Master of his college (Worcester) when he met him, only from sheer inability to recognize him by sight. . . . Seeing in Bell & Bradfute’s window a copy of Hawthorne’s “Mosses,” about which I had been talking to his daughter, I went in to buy it, he readily undertaking the light portorage. . . . Our way led through George Square to the Meadows, and at the end of “Lover’s Walk” he insisted upon my not incurring the fatigue of accompanying him further. It was between eight and nine on that lovely July evening that I took leave—my last leave

—of the man to whom I owed so much. At the very moment of parting all seemed to me like a dream : that we had ever met, that we were now parting. Could it all be but the baseless fabric of a vision, and was this the break-up, to leave not a rack behind? . . . The parting was over, and he went on his way. Lingerin, I watched that receding figure, as it dimmed in the distance. The last I saw of him he had opened Hawthorne's book, and went along reading as he walked. In that attitude I lost sight of him. He went on his way, and I saw him no more.—FRANCIS JACOX (quoted in Page's "Life of De Quincey").

The next slide of the lantern is to represent a quite peculiar and abnormal case. It introduces a strangely fragile, unsubstantial, and puerile figure, wherein, however, resided one of the most potent and original spirits that ever frequented a tenement of clay. He shall be called, on account of associations that may or may not be found out, Thomas Papaverius. But how to make palpable to the ordinary human being one so signally divested of all the material and common characteristics of his race, yet so nobly endowed with its rarer and loftier attributes, almost paralyzes the pen at the very beginning.

In what mood and shape shall he be brought forward? Shall it be as first we met at the table of Lucullus, whereto he was seduced by the false pretence that he should there meet with one who entertained novel and anarchical opinions regarding the Golden Ass of Apuleius? No one speaks of

"*Papaverius*":—*J. H. Burton's sketch of De Quincey.*

"*Papaverius*."

waiting dinner for him. He will come and depart at his own sweet will, neither burdened with punctualities, nor burdening others by exacting them. The festivities of the afternoon are far on when a commotion is heard in the hall as if some dog or other stray animal had forced its way in. The instinct of a friendly guest tells him of the arrival; he opens the door, and fetches in the little stranger. What can it be? a street-boy of some sort? His costume, in fact, is a boy's duffle great-coat, very threadbare, with a hole in it, and buttoned tight to the chin, where it meets the fragments of a parti-colored belcher handkerchief; on his feet are list shoes, covered with snow, for it is a stormy winter night; and the trousers—some one suggests that they are inner linen garments blackened with writing ink, but that *Papaverius* never would have been at the trouble so to disguise them. What can be the theory of such a costume? The simplest thing in the world—it consisted of the fragments of apparel nearest at hand. Had chance thrown to him a court single-breasted coat, with a bishop's apron, a kilt, and top-boots, in these he would have made his entry.

The first impression that a boy has appeared vanishes instantly. Though in one of the sweetest and most genial of his essays he shows how every man retains so much in him of the child he originally was—and he himself retained a great deal of that primitive simplicity—it was buried within the depths of his heart—not visible externally. On the contrary, on one occasion when he corrected an erroneous reference to an event as being a century

old by saying that he recollected its occurrence, one felt almost a surprise at the necessary limitation in his age, so old did he appear with his arched brow loaded with thought, and the countless little wrinkles which ingrained his skin, gathering thickly around the curiously expressive and subtle lips. These lips are speedily opened by some casual remark, and presently the flood of talk passes forth from them, free, clear, and continuous—never rising into declamation—never losing a certain mellow earnestness, and all consisting of sentences as exquisitely jointed together, as if they were destined to challenge the criticism of the remotest posterity. Still the hours stride over each other, and still flows on the stream of gentle rhetoric, as if it were *labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum*. It is now far into the night, and slight hints and suggestions are propagated about separation and home-going. The topic starts new ideas on the progress of civilization, the effect of habit on men in all ages, and the power of the domestic affections. Descending from generals to the special, he could testify to the inconvenience of late hours; for was it not the other night that, coming to what was, or what he believed to be his own door, he knocked, and knocked, but the old woman within either couldn't or wouldn't hear him; so he scrambled over a wall, and having taken his repose in a furrow, was able to testify to the extreme unpleasantness of such a couch. The predial groove might indeed nourish kindly the infant seeds and shoots of the peculiar vegetable to which it was appropriated, but was not a comfortable place of repose for adult men.

"Papa-
verius."

"Papa-
verius."

Shall I try another sketch of him, when, travel-stained and footsore, he glided in on us one night like a shadow, the child by the fire gazing on him with round eyes of astonishment, and suggesting that he should get a penny and go home—a proposal which he subjected to some philosophical criticism very far wide of its practical tenor. How far he had wandered since he had last refreshed himself, or either whether he had eaten food that day, were matters on which there was no getting articulate utterance from him. Though his costume was muddy, however, and his communications about the material wants of life very hazy, the ideas which he had stored up during his wandering, poured themselves forth as clear and sparkling, both in logic and language, as the purest fountain that springs from a Highland rock.

How that wearied, worn little body was to be refreshed was a difficult problem : soft food disagreed with him—the hard he could not eat. Suggestions pointed at length to the solution of that vegetable unguent to which he had given a sort of lustre, and it might be supposed that there were some fifty cases of acute toothache to be treated in the house that night. How many drops? Drops! nonsense. If the wineglasses of the establishment were not beyond the ordinary normal size, there was no risk—and so the weary is at rest for a time.

At early morn a triumphant cry of *Eureka!* calls me to his place of rest. With his unfailing instinct he has got at the books, and lugged a considerable heap of them around him. That one which specially claims his attention—my best bound quarto—

is spread upon a piece of bedroom furniture readily at hand, and of sufficient height to let him pore over it as he lies recumbent on the floor, with only one article of attire to separate him from the condition in which Archimedes, according to the popular story, shouted the same triumphant cry. He had discovered a very remarkable anachronism in the commonly received histories of a very important period. As he expounded it, turning up his unearthly face from the book with an almost painful expression of grave eagerness, it occurred to me that I had seen something like the scene in Dutch paintings of the Temptation of St. Anthony.

Suppose the scene changed to a pleasant country house, where the enlivening talk has made a guest forget

“The lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,”

that lie between him and his place of rest. He must be instructed in his course, but the instruction reveals more difficulties than it removes, and there is much doubt and discussion, which Papaverius at once clears up as effectually as he had ever dispersed a cloud of logical sophisms; and this time the feat is performed by a stroke of the thoroughly practical, which looks like inspiration,—he will accompany the forlorn traveller, and lead him through the difficulties of the way—for have not midnight wanderings and musings made him familiar with all its intricacies? Roofed by a huge wideawake, which makes his tiny figure look like the stalk of some great fungus, with a lantern of more than common

“*Papaverius.*”

"*Papaverius.*"

dimensions in his hand, away he goes down the wooded path, up the steep bank, along the brawling stream, and across the waterfall—and ever as he goes there comes from him a continued stream of talk concerning the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, and other kindred matters. Surely if we two were seen by any human eyes, it must have been supposed that some gnome, or troll, or kelpie was luring the listener to his doom. The worst of such affairs as this was, the consciousness, that when left, the old man would continue walking on until, weariness overcoming him, he would take his rest, wherever that happened, like some poor mendicant. He used to denounce, with his most fervid eloquence, that barbarous and brutal provision of the law of England which rendered sleeping in the open air an act of vagrancy, and so punishable, if the sleeper could not give a satisfactory account of himself a thing which Papaverius never could give under any circumstances. After all, I fear this is an attempt to describe the indescribable. It was the commonest of sayings when any of his friends were mentioning to each other "his last," and creating mutual shrugs of astonishment, that, were one to attempt to tell all about him, no man would believe it, so separate would the whole be from all the normal conditions of human nature.

The difficulty becomes more inextricable in passing from specific little incidents to an estimation of the general nature of the man. The logicians lucidly describe definition as being *per genus et differentiam*. You have the characteristics in which all of the *genus* partake as common ground, and then

you individualize your object by showing in what it differs from the others of the genus. But we are denied this standard for *Papaverius*, so entirely did he stand apart, divested of the ordinary characteristics of social man—of those characteristics without which the human race as a body could not get on or exist. For instance, those who knew him a little might call him a loose man in money matters; those who knew him closer laughed at the idea of coupling any notion of pecuniary or other like responsibility with his nature. You might as well attack the character of the nightingale, which may have nipped up your five-pound note and torn it to shreds to serve as nest-building material. Only immediate craving necessities could ever extract from him an acknowledgment of the common vulgar agencies by which men subsist in civilized society; and only while the necessity lasted did the acknowledgment exist. Take just one example, which will render this clearer than any generalities. He arrives very late at a friend's door, and on gaining admission—a process in which he often endured impediments—he represents, with his usual silver voice and measured rhetoric, the absolute necessity of his being then and there invested with a sum of money in the current coin of the realm—the amount limited, from the nature of his necessities, which he very freely states, to seven shillings and sixpence. Discovering, or fancying he discovers, signs that his eloquence is likely to be unproductive, he is fortunately reminded that, should there be any difficulty in connection with security for the repayment of the loan, he is at that moment in possession

"Papaverius."

"*Papa-
verius.*"

of a document, which he is prepared to deposit with the lender—a document calculated, he cannot doubt, to remove any feeling of anxiety which the most prudent person could experience in the circumstances. After a rummage in his pockets, which develops miscellaneous and varied, but as yet by no means valuable possessions, he at last comes to the object of his search, a crumpled bit of paper, and spreads it out—a fifty-pound bank-note ! The friend, who knew him well, was of opinion that, had he, on delivering over the seven shillings and sixpence, received the bank-note, he never would have heard anything more of the transaction from the other party. It was also his opinion that, before coming to a personal friend, the owner of the note had made several efforts to raise money on it among persons who might take a purely business view of such transactions ; but the lateness of the hour, and something in the appearance of the thing altogether, had induced these mercenaries to forget their cunning, and decline the transaction.

He stretched till it broke the proverb, *Bis dat qui cito dat*. His giving was quick enough on the rare occasions when he had wherewithal to give, but then the act was final and could not be repeated. If he suffered in his own person from this peculiarity, he suffered still more in his sympathies, for he was full of them to all breathing creatures, and, like poor Goldy, it was agony to him to hear the beggar's cry of distress, and to hear it without the means of assuaging it, though in a departed fifty pounds there were doubtless the elements for appeasing many a street wail. All sums of money

were measured by him through the common standard of immediate use ; and with more solemn pomp of diction than he applied to the bank-note, might he inform you that, with the gentleman opposite, to whom he had hitherto been entirely a stranger, but who happened to be nearest to him at the time when the exigency occurred to him, he had just succeeded in negotiating a loan of "two pence."

. . . Further, Papaverius had an extraordinary insight into practical human life ; not merely in the abstract, but in the concrete ; not merely as a philosopher of human nature, but as one who saw into those who passed him in the walk of life with the kind of intuition attributed to expert detectives—a faculty that is known to have belonged to more than one dreamer, and is one of the mysteries in the nature of J. J. Rousseau ; and, by the way, like Rousseau's, his handwriting was clear, angular, and unimpassioned, and not less uniform and legible than printing—as if the medium of conveying so noble a thing as thought ought to be carefully, symmetrically, and decorously constructed, let all other material things be as negligently and scornfully dealt with as may be.

This is a long præmium to the description of his characteristics as a book-hunter—but these can be briefly told. Not for him were the common enjoyments and excitements of the pursuit. He cared not to add volume unto volume, and heap up the relics of the printing-press. All the external niceties about pet editions, peculiarities of binding or of printing, rarity itself, were to him as if they were not. His pursuit, indeed, was like that of the sav-

"*Papaverius.*"

"Papaverius."

age who seeks but to appease the hunger of the moment. If he catch a prey just sufficient for his desires, it is well ; yet he will not hesitate to bring down the elk or the buffalo, and, satiating himself with the choicer delicacies, abandon the bulk of the carcass to the wolves or the vultures. So of Papaverius. If his intellectual appetite was craving after some passage in the *Œdipus*, or in the *Medeia*, or in Plato's *Republic*, he would be quite contented with the most tattered and valueless fragment of the volume if it contained what he wanted ; but, on the other hand, he would not hesitate to seize upon your tall copy in russia gilt and tooled. Nor would the exemption of an *editio princeps* from every day sordid work restrain his sacrilegious hands. If it should contain the thing he desires to see, what is to hinder him from wrenching out the twentieth volume of your *Encyclopédie Méthodique* or *Ersch und Gruber*, leaving a vacancy like an extracted front tooth, and carrying it off to his den of Cacus? . . .

The learned world may very fairly be divided into those who return the books borrowed by them, and those who do not. Papaverius belonged decidedly to the latter order. A friend addicted to the marvellous boasts that, under the pressure of a call by a public library to replace a mutilated book with a new copy, which would have cost £30, he recovered a volume from Papaverius, through the agency of a person specially bribed and authorized to take any necessary measures, insolence and violence excepted—but the power of extraction that must have been employed in such a process excites very painful reflections. Some legend, too, there is of a book

creditor having forced his way into the Cacus den, and there seen a sort of rubble-work inner wall of volumes, with their edges outwards, while others, bound and unbound, the plebeian sheepskin and the aristocratic russian, were squeezed into certain tubs drawn from the washing establishment of a confiding landlady. In other instances the book has been recognized at large, greatly enhanced in value by a profuse edging of manuscript notes from a gifted pen—a phenomenon calculated to bring into use the speculations of the civilians about pictures painted upon other people's panels. What became of all his waifs and strays, it might be well not to inquire too curiously. If he ran short of legitimate *tabula rasa* to write on, do you think he would hesitate to tear out the most convenient leaves of any broad-margined book, whether belonging to himself or another? Nay, it is said he once gave in "copy" written on the edges of a tall octavo, *Somnium Scipionis*; and as he did not obliterate the original matter, the printer was rather puzzled, and made a funny jumble between the letter-press Latin and the manuscript English. All these things were the types of an intellectual vitality which despised and thrust aside all that was gross or material in that wherewith it came in contact. Surely never did the austerities of monk or anchorite so entirely cast all these away as his peculiar nature removed them from him. It may be questioned if he ever knew what it was "to eat a good dinner," or could even comprehend the nature of such a felicity. Yet in all the sensuous nerves which connect as it were the body with the ideal, he was painfully suscepti-

"*Papa-
verius.*"

"*Papa-
verius.*"

ble. Hence a false quantity or a wrong note in music was agony to him; and it is remembered with what ludicrous solemnity he apostrophized his unhappy fate as one over whom a cloud of the darkest despair had just been drawn—a peacock had come to live within hearing distance from him, and not only the terrific yells of the accursed biped pierced him to the soul, but the continued terror of their recurrence kept his nerves in agonizing tension during the intervals of silence.

Peace be with his gentle and kindly spirit, now for some time separated from its grotesque and humble tenement of clay. It is both right and pleasant to say that the characteristics here spoken of were not those of his latter days. In these he was tended by affectionate hands; and I have always thought it a wonderful instance of the power of domestic care and management that, through the ministrations of a devoted offspring, this strange being was so cared for, that those who came in contact with him then, and then only, might have admired him as the patriarchal head of an agreeable and elegant household.—JOHN HILL BURTON ("The Book-Hunter").¹

¹ Burton (John Hill). The Book-Hunter. 12mo. Edinburgh, 1862.

FRANCIS, LORD JEFFREY.

1773-1850.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE story of Jeffrey's life is mainly the record of a series of brilliant and honorable successes. His powers were precisely adapted to the requirements of his time ; and few men of eminence have gone through the world with less of that friction which is the result of an imperfect harmony between the worker and his work, the man and his surroundings. Step after step, he won his way by strenuous effort and native ability, steadily overcoming the serious obstacles of poverty and a humble social station.

Notwithstanding the transparency of Jeffrey's character—a character with sharp, clearly defined outlines—he is somewhat open to misconstruction. There are at least two very different aspects in which he may be regarded : first, as a merciless critic ; an astute political leader ; an uncommonly good talker ; an eager, energetic, shrewd man of the world, delighting in crowds, and living chiefly for the passing hour : second, as a man of sensitive and generous nature, endowed with a poetic temperament, and a keen appreciation of beauty ; gladly turning away from scenes of social excite-

ment, leaving brilliant assemblages of the witty and the wise, to find his highest pleasure in the contemplation of nature, and in the society of his family and friends. Either theory of his character might be maintained with considerable plausibility, and supported by very respectable evidence ; and yet he was neither insincere nor superficial. He was, however, exceptionally versatile, and for this reason he was often misunderstood.

His mercurial temperament, and the diffusion of his powers in various fields of action, prevented him from accomplishing any enduring literary work ; but the sterling quality of those powers is manifest, and may be fairly estimated not so much by the brilliancy of his achievements, as by their stability. For it must be remembered that, through a long career he was a potent force in literature, in law, and in politics, maintaining his ascendancy, and exerting a commanding influence, until the very end of his life.

There is still room for a biography of Jeffrey. Lord Cockburn's work is by no means satisfactory. Such as it is, however, it is the principal authority. See also Thomas Carlyle's "*Reminiscences* ;" Carlyle's "*Letters*," edited by J. A. Froude ; Harriet Martineau's "*Autobiography* ;" Trevelyan's "*Life of Macaulay* ;" "*Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk* ;" "*The Life and Letters of George Ticknor* ;" Hazlitt's "*Spirit of the Age* ;" and Lady Holland's "*Memoir of Sydney Smith*."

LEADING EVENTS OF JEFFREY'S LIFE.

1773. Born, October 23d, in Edinburgh.
1781.—(Aged 8.) At the High School in Edinburgh.
1787.—(Aged 14.) At Glasgow College.
1791.—(Aged 18.) Enters Oxford University.
1794.—(Aged 21.) Admitted to the bar, in Edinburgh.
1801.—(Aged 28.) Marries Miss Catherine Wilson.
1803.—(Aged 30.) Edits the *Edinburgh Review*.
1805.—(Aged 32.) His wife dies.
1813.—(Aged 40.) Visits the United States. Marries Miss Charlotte Wilkes.
1814.—(Aged 41.) Returns to Scotland.
1815.—(Aged 42.) Travels upon the Continent.
1820.—(Aged 47.) Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow.
1829.—(Aged 56.) Elected Dean of the Faculty of Advocates.
Retires from the *Edinburgh Review*.
1830.—(Aged 57.) Lord Advocate.
1831.—(Aged 58.) Enters Parliament.
1834.—(Aged 61.) Succeeds Lord Craigie as Judge of the Court of Session.
1850.—(Aged 76 years and 3 months.) Dies, January 26th.

FRANCIS, LORD JEFFREY.

THERE are no satisfactory accounts of Jeffrey's childhood. His biographer, Lord Cockburn,¹ merely tells us that he was "the tiniest possible child, dark and vigorous." Of his school-days, Lord Cockburn says, "His few surviving class-fellows only recollect him as a little, clever, anxious boy, nearly always near the top of the class, and who never lost a place without shedding tears. . . . He escaped being made a wonder of."

Childhood.

Principal Macfarlane (who was his fellow-student) says, that, during the first session "he exhibited nothing remarkable except a degree of quickness, bordering, as some thought, on petulance; and the whim of cherishing a premature moustache. . . .

*At Glasgow
University,
1787-1789,
aged 14-16.*

In his second session he disclosed himself more satisfactorily. Principal Macfarlane says, "He broke upon us very brilliantly. In a debating society . . . he distinguished himself as one of the most acute and fluent speakers; his favorite subjects being criticism and metaphysics." Professor Jar-

¹ Cockburn (Henry Thomas, Lord). *Life of Lord Jeffrey.* 2 vols., 8vo. Edinburgh, 1852.

*At Glasgow
University,
1787-1789,
aged 14-16.*

dine used to require his pupils to write an exercise, and then to make them give in written remarks on each other's work. Principal Haldane's¹ essay fell to be examined by Jeffrey, who, on this occasion probably, made his first critical adventure. "My exercise (says the Principal) fell into the hands of Jeffrey, and sorely do I repent that I did not preserve the essay, with his remarks upon it. For though they were unmercifully severe, they gave early promise² of that critical acumen which was afterward fully developed in the pages of the Edinburgh Review."—LORD COCKBURN ("Life of Jeffrey").

*Studios
habits in
youth.*

After leaving Glasgow, in May, 1789, he returned home, and remained in and about Edinburgh till September, 1791, when he went to Oxford. . . . No period of his youth was passed more usefully than this; when he was left to his own thoughts and to his own occupations. He adhered so steadily in what he calls the "dear, retired, adored, little window" of his Lawnmarket garret, to his system of self-working, that, though leading a very cheerful and open air life, the papers of his composition that remain, deducting articles of only a sheet or two, are about sixty in number. This is not mentioned to earn for him the foolish and unfortunate praise too often given to prematurity, but as facts in the history of the individual, and because they reveal

¹ Jeffrey's fellow-student, at this time.

² Jeffrey was about fifteen years old.

the culture which was rewarded by the subsequent harvest.¹—LORD COCKBURN (“Life of Jeffrey”).

In his youth Jeffrey seriously thought of being a poet, and devoted much time to the composition of verses, none of which have been given to the public. Lord Cockburn gives the following extract from a letter to his sister, written from Oxford, in 1791 :—“I feel I shall never be a great man unless it be as a poet. I have almost returned to my water system, for I have scarcely tasted wine this fortnight ; of course I have spent it mostly in solitude, and I think most pleasantly of any since I came here. This way of life does certainly nourish a visionary and romantic temper of mind, which is quite unfit for this part of the world. . . . Notwithstanding all this, my poetry does not improve ; I think it is growing worse every week. If I could find in my heart to abandon it, I believe I should be the better for it.” It was not, however, until several years after this date, that he finally abandoned his favorite idea.²

Poetic aspirations.

He is of low stature, but his figure is elegant and well proportioned. This he seems to be aware of by the assiduity with which he takes care that his little personage shall always be set out to the best advantage. The continually varying expression of his countenance renders it impossible to say what

Personal appearance.

¹ These were all written between May, 1789, and December, 1790. Lord Cockburn gives extracts from these papers, which show very remarkable ability for a boy of seventeen.

² See p. 308.

*Personal
appearance.*

his features are. . . . The face is rather elongated, the chin deficient, the mouth well-formed, with a mingled expression of determination, sentiment, and arch mockery; the nose is slightly curved. . . . The brow never presents the same appearance for two moments consecutively; it is now smooth and unfurrowed, lofty and vaulted;—look again, and the skin is contracted upwards into a thousand parallel wrinkles, offering the semblance of a “forehead villainous low.” The eye is the most peculiar feature of the countenance; it is large and sparkling, but with a want of transparency that gives it the appearance of a heartless enigma.—ANON. (*New Monthly Magazine*, 1831).

It is a face which any man would pass without observation in a crowd, because it is small and swarthy, and entirely devoid of lofty or commanding outlines—and besides, his stature is so low, that he might walk close under your chin or mine without ever catching the eye even for a moment.

Mr. Jeffrey . . . is a very active-looking man, with an appearance of extraordinary vivacity in all his motions and gestures. His face is one which cannot be understood at a single look—perhaps it requires, as it certainly invites, a long and anxious scrutiny before it lays itself open to the gazer. The features are neither handsome, nor even very defined in their outlines: and yet the effect of the whole is as striking as any arrangement either of more noble or more marked features, which ever came under my view. The forehead is very singularly shaped, describing in its bend from side to

*Personal
appearance.*

side a larger segment of a circle than is at all common ; compressed below the temples almost as much as Sterne's ; and throwing out sinuses above the eyes, of an extremely bold and compact structure. The hair is very black and wiry, standing in ragged, bristly clumps out from the upper part of his head, but lying close and firm lower down, especially about the ears. Altogether, it is picturesque, and adds to the effect of the visage. The mouth is the most expressive part of his face. . . . The lips are very fine, but they tremble and vibrate, even when brought close together, in such a way as to give the idea of an intense, never-ceasing play of mind. There is a delicate kind of sneer almost always upon them, which has not the least appearance of ill-temper about it, but seems to belong entirely to the speculative understanding of the man.¹

I have said that the mouth is the most expressive part of his face--and, in one sense, this is the truth, for it is certainly the seat of all its rapid and transitory expression. But what speaking things are his eyes ! They disdain to be agitated by those lesser emotions which pass over the lips ; they reserve their fierce and dark energies for matters of more moment ; once kindled with the heat of any passion, how they beam, flash upon flash ! The scintillation of a star is not more fervid. Perhaps, notwithstanding this, their repose is even more worthy of atten-

¹ Dr. John Brown says of Jeffrey's mouth, "mobile and yet firm, arch, and kind, with a beautiful procacity or petulance about it, that you would not like absent in him, or present in any one else." *Horæ Subsecivæ. Third Series. Edinburgh, 1882.*

*Personal
appearance.*

tion. With the capacity of emitting such a flood of radiance, they seem to take a pleasure in banishing every ray from their black, inscrutable, glazed, tarn-like circles. I think their prevailing language is, after all, rather a melancholy than a merry one—it is, at least, very full of reflection. Such is a faint outline of this countenance, the features of which (to say nothing at all of their expression), have, as yet, baffled every attempt of the portrait painters. . . . A sharp, and at the same time very deep-toned voice—a very bad pronunciation, but accompanied with very little of the Scotch accent—a light and careless manner, exchanged now and then for an infinite variety of more earnest expression and address—this is as much as I could carry away from my first visit.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk," 1819).

I often peeped through the green curtain which hung before his contracted judicial stall, and watched the wondrous little man unravelling, in his quick, impatient way, the tangle of Scotch Law. His restless person was in a state of perpetual movement; his eyes turning here, there, and everywhere; his features in constant play; his forehead rippling in quick successive wrinkles, as if striving to throw off his close-fitting judicial wig, which seemed to grasp his diminutive head painfully, almost down to his eyebrows, and with its great stiff curls of white horse-hair heavily to oppress him with its weight. His arms, too, he was ever moving with an uneasy action, as if he would rid himself of the incumbrance of his official robe of scarlet,

which covered his shoulders, and hung in loose folds from his neck to his wrists.—ROBERT TOMES ("My College Days").

A delicate, attractive, dainty little figure as he merely walked about, much more if he were speaking; uncommonly bright black eyes, instinct with vivacity, intelligence, and kindly fire; roundish brow, delicate oval face full of rapid expression, figure light, nimble, pretty though so small, perhaps hardly five feet in height. He had his gown, almost never any wig, wore his black hair rather closely cropt; I have seen the back part of it jerk suddenly out in some of the rapid expressions of his face, and knew even if behind him that his brow was then puckered, and his eyes looking archly, half-contemptuously out, in conformity to some conclusive little cut his tongue was giving.¹—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").

*Personal
appearance.*

There was one accomplishment of which he was particularly ambitious, but failed to attain. He left home² with the dialect and the accent of Scotland strong upon his lips; and, always contemplating the probability of public speaking being his vocation, he was bent upon purifying himself of the national inconvenience. . . . He certainly succeeded in the abandonment of his habitual Scotch. He returned, in this respect, a conspicuously altered lad. The change was so sudden and so complete, and it excited the surprise of his friends, and

*Voice and
accent.*

¹ See pp. 315, 318.

² To go to Oxford University.

*Voice and
accent.*

furnished others with ridicule for many years. But he was by no means so successful in acquiring an English voice. With an ear which, though not alert in musical perception, was delicate enough to feel every variation of speech; what he picked up was a high-keyed accent, and a sharp pronunciation. Then the extreme rapidity of his utterance, and the smartness of some of his notes, gave his delivery an air of affectation, to which some were only reconciled by habit and respect. The result, on the whole, was exactly as described by his friend, the late Lord Holland, who said that though Jeffrey *had lost the broad Scotch at Oxford, he had only gained the narrow English.*"—LORD COCKEURN ("Life of Jeffrey").

His accent was . . . singular, but it was by no means Scotch: at his first going to Oxford (where he did not stay long) he had peremptorily crushed down his Scotch (which he privately had in store in excellent condition to the very end of his life, producible with highly ludicrous effect on occasion), and adopted instead a strange, swift, sharp-sounding, fitful modulation, part of it pungent, quasi-latrant, other parts of it cooing, bantery, lovingly quizzical, which no charms of his fine ringing voice (metallic tenor of sweet tone), and of his vivacious rapid looks, and pretty little attitudes and gestures, could altogether reconcile you to, but in which he persisted through good report and bad. Old Braxey (Marqueen, Lord Braxfield), a sad old cynic, on whom Jeffrey used to set me laughing often enough, was commonly reported to have

said, on hearing Jeffrey again after that Oxford sojourn, "The laddie has clean tint his Scotch, and found nae English!" which was an exaggerative reading of the fact, his vowels and syllables being elaborately English (or English and *more*, e.g. "heppy," "my lud," etc., etc.), while the tune which he sang them to was all his own.—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").

*Voice and
accent.*

His voice was distinct and silvery; so clear and precise, that, when in good order, it was heard above a world of discordant sounds. The utterance was excessively rapid; but without sputtering, slurring, or confusion; and regulated into deliberate emphasis, whenever this was proper. The velocity of the current was not more remarkable than its purity and richness. His command of language was unlimited.—LORD COCKBURN ("Life of Jeffrey").

His voice, clear, harmonious, and sonorous, had something of metallic in it, something almost plaintive; never rose into alt, into any dissonance or shrillness, nor carried much the character of humor, though a fine feeling of the ludicrous always dwelt in him—as you would notice best when he got into Scotch dialect, and gave you, with admirable truth of mimicry, old Edinburgh incidents and experiences of his.¹—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").

His laugh was small and by no means Homeric;

¹ See p. 316.

Laughter.

he never laughed loud (could not do it, I should think), and indeed often sniggered slightly than laughed in any way.—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").

Conversation.

He was certainly a first-rate talker. But he was not an avowed sayer of good things ; nor did he deal but very sparingly in anecdote, or in personalities, or in repartee ; and he very seldom told a story, or quoted ; and never lectured ; and though perpetually discussing, almost never disputed ; and though joyous, was no great laughier. What then did he do ? He did this :—His mind was constantly full of excellent matter ; his spirit was always lively ; and his heart was never wrong ; and the effusion of these produced the charm. He had no exclusive topics. All subjects were welcome ; and all found him ready, if not in knowledge, at least in fancy. . . . Speaking seemed necessary for his existence. The intellectual fountains were so full, that they were always bubbling over, and it would have been painful to restrain them. For a great talker, he was very little of a usurper. Every body else had full scope, and indeed was encouraged ; and he himself, though profuse, was never long at a time. . . . Amid all his fluency of talk, and all his variety of matter, a great part of the delight of his conversation arose from its moral qualities. Though never assuming the office of a teacher, his goodness of feeling was constantly transpiring. No one could take a walk, or pass a day or an evening with him, without having all his rational and generous tastes confirmed, and a steadier conviction than be-

fore of the dependence of happiness on kindness and duty. Let him be as bold and as free, and as incautious, and hilarious as he might, no sentiment could escape him that tended to excuse inhumanity or meanness, or that failed to cherish high principles and generous affections. Then the language in which this talent and worth were disclosed! The very words were a delight. Copious and sparkling, they often imparted nearly as much pleasure as the merry or the tender wisdom they conveyed. Those who left him might easily retire without having any particular saying to report, but never without an admiration for mental richness and striking expression.—LORD COCKBURN ("Life of Jeffrey").

There is no subject on which he is not *au fait*: no company in which he is not ready to scatter his pearls for sport. . . . His only difficulty seems to be, not to speak, but to be silent. . . . He is never absurd, nor has he any favorite points which he is always bringing forward. It cannot be denied that there is something bordering on petulance of manner, but it is of that least offensive kind which may be accounted for from merit and from success, and implies no exclusive pretensions nor the least particle of ill-will to others. On the contrary, Mr. Jeffrey is profuse of his encomiums and admiration of others, but still with a certain reservation of a right to differ or to blame. He cannot rest on one side of a question: he is obliged, by a mercurial habit and disposition, to vary his point of view. If he is ever tedious, it is from an excess of liveliness:

Conversa-
tion.

he oppresses from a sense of airy lightness. He is always setting out on a fresh scent : there are always *relays* of topics. . . . New causes are called ; he holds a brief in his hand for every possible question. This is a fault. Mr. Jeffrey is not obtrusive, is not impatient of opposition, is not unwilling to be interrupted ; but what is said by another seems to make no impression on him ; he is bound to dispute, to answer it, as if he was in Court, or as if he were in a paltry Debating Society, where young beginners were trying their hands. . . . He cannot help cross-examining a witness, or stating the adverse view of the question. He listens not to judge, but to reply. In consequence of this, you can as little tell the impression your observations make on him as what weight to assign to his. — WILLIAM HAZLITT ("Spirit of the Age").¹

I have never, I believe, heard so many ideas thrown out by any man in so short a space of time, and apparently with such entire negation of exertion. His conversation acted upon me like the first delightful hour after taking opium. The thoughts he scattered so readily about him (his words, rapid, and wonderfully rapid as they are, appearing to be continually panting after his conceptions)—his thoughts, I say, were at once so striking, and so just, that they took in succession entire possession of my imagination, and yet with so felicitous a *tact* did he forbear from expressing any one of these too

¹ Hazlitt (William). The Spirit of the Age ; or, Contemporary Portraits. 8vo. London, 1825.

fully, that the reason was always kept in a pleasing kind of excitement, by the endeavor more thoroughly to examine their bearings. . . . I have heard some men display more profoundness of reflection, and others a much greater command of the conversational picturesque—but I never before witnessed any thing to be compared with the blending together of apparently little consistent powers in the whole strain of his discourse. Such a power, in the first place, of throwing away at once every useless part of the idea to be discussed, and then such a happy redundancy of imagination to present the essential and reserved part in its every possible relation, and point of view—and all this connected with so much of the plain *savoir faire* of actual existence, and such a thorough scorn of mystification, it is really a very wonderful intellectual coalition.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk").

In conversation he is brilliant, or rather sparkling, lively, kind, willing either to speak or listen, and, above all men I have ever seen, ready and copious, on the whole exceedingly pleasant in light talk—yet, alas! light, light, too light. He will talk of nothing *earnestly*, though his look sometimes betrays an earnest feeling. He starts contradictions in such cases, and argues, argues. Neither is his arguing like that of a thinker, but of the advocate—victory, not truth.—THOMAS CARLYLE (Extract from "Journal," in Froude's Carlyle).¹

¹ See pp. 307, 319 et seq.

*Dramatic
powers.*

One of the nights there,¹ . . . encouraged possibly by the presence of poor James Anderson, an ingenuous, simple, youngish man, and our nearest gentleman neighbor, Jeffrey in the drawing-room was cleverer, brighter, and more amusing than I ever saw him elsewhere. We had got to talk of public speaking, of which Jeffrey had plenty to say, and found Anderson and all of us ready enough to hear. Before long he fell into mimicking of public speakers, men unknown, perhaps imaginary generic specimens; and did it with such a felicity, flowing readiness, ingenuity, and perfection of imitation as I never saw equalled, and had not given him credit for before. Our cozy little drawing-room, bright-shining, hidden in the lowly wilderness, how beautiful it looked to us, become suddenly as it were a Temple of the Muses! The little man strutted about full of electric fire, with attitudes, with gesticulations, still more with winged words, often broken-winged, amid our admiring laughter; gave us the windy grandiloquent specimen, the ponderous stupid, the airy ditto, various specimens, as the talk, chiefly his own, spontaneously suggested, of which there was a little preparatory interstice between each two. And the mimicry was so complete, you would have said not his mind only, but his very body became the specimens, his face filled with the expression represented, and his little figure seeming to grow gigantic if the personage required it. At length he gave us the abstruse costive specimen, which had a meaning and no utterance for it, but went about clamber-

¹ In Carlyle's house at Craigenputtoch.

ing, stumbling, as on a path of loose bowlders, and ended in total down-break, amid peals of the heartiest laughter from us all. This of the aërial little sprite standing there in fatal collapse, with the brightest of eyes sternly gazing into utter nothingness and dumbness, was one of the most tickling and genially ludicrous things I ever saw, and it prettily winded up our little drama.—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").

Dramatic powers.

There was one leading peculiarity in Jeffrey's character, which perhaps rendered time of some value in his case, that would otherwise have been lost; I mean the grace and alacrity wherewith, if opportunity offered, he could turn ordinary conversation to account. If the most commonplace remark was tendered on a subject in itself interesting, he would rapidly reply with an illustration as original as it was unexpected. And if his superficial neighbor luckily ventured to differ from him in opinion, then he would rouse and present the matter in a hundred new lights (if needful) so as to carry his point.—R. P. GILLIES ("Memoirs of a Literary Veteran").

Turning ordinary conversation to account.

He makes fewer *blots* in addressing an audience than any one we remember to have heard. There is not a hair's-breadth space between any two of his words, nor is there a single expression either ill-chosen or out of its place. He speaks without stopping to take breath, with ease, with point, with elegance, and without "spinning the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument."

Character of his oratory.

*Character
of his
oratory.*

He may be said to weave words into any shapes he pleases for use or ornament, as the glass-blower moulds the vitreous fluid with his breath; and his sentences shine like glass from their polished smoothness, and are equally transparent. . . . Whenever the Scotch advocate has appeared at the bar of the English House of Lords, he has been admired by those who were in the habit of attending to speeches there, as having the greatest fluency of language and the greatest subtlety of distinction of any one of the profession. The law-reporters were as little able to follow him from the extreme rapidity of his utterance as from the tenuity and evanescent nature of his reasoning.—W. HAZLITT ("Spirit of the Age").

Oratory.

His delivery is not commanding—that his figure forbids—but it is fascinating. He rises, settles his gown about his shoulders, and commences in a low tone of voice. For the first two or three sentences, he seems beating about for ideas—words there are plenty. But he soon comes upon the track. With the side of his face turned towards the person or persons he is addressing, he fixes his serpent eye upon them, and holds them fast. At one time he leans forward and speaks in tones as harsh as the grating of an earthenware plate upon a revolving grindstone; again he stands erect, or even casts himself backward, and without any sensible motion of his lips, emits a continuous stream of most melodious voice.—ANON. (*New Monthly Magazine*, 1831).

I have told you, in a former letter, that his pro-

nunciation is wretched—it is a mixture of provincial English, with undignified Scotch, altogether snappish and offensive, and which would be quite sufficient to render the elocution of a more ordinary man utterly disgusting; but the flow of his eloquence is so overpoweringly rapid, so unweariedly energetic, so entirely unlike every other man's mode of speaking, that the pronunciation of the particular words is quite lost to one's view, in the midst of that continual effort which is required, in order to make the understanding, even the ear of the listener, keep pace with the glowing velocity of the declamation. His words come more profusely than words ever came before, and yet it seems as if they were quite unable to follow, *passibus equis*, the still more amazing speed of his thought. You sit, while minute follows minute uncounted and unheeded, in a state of painful excitation, as if you were in a room overlighted with gas, or close under the crash of a whole pealing orchestra.

This astonishing fluency and vivacity, if possessed by a person of very inferior talents, might for a little be sufficient to create an illusion in his favor; and I have heard that such things have been. But the more you can overcome the effect of Mr. Jeffrey's dazzling rapidity, and concentrate your attention on the ideas embodied with such supernatural facility, the greater will be your admiration. It is impossible to conceive the existence of a more fertile, teeming intellect. The flood of his illustration seems to be at all times rioting up to the very brim—yet he commands and restrains it with equal strength and skill; or, if it does boil over for a

Oratory.

moment, it spreads such a richness all around, that it is impossible to find fault with its extravagance. . . . If he be not the most delightful, he is certainly by far the most wonderful of speakers.—J. G. LOCKHART ("Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk," 1819).

The amazing rapidity of his delivery operated much against the speech.¹ I think I never heard a person, either in or out of the House, speak so fast as he did on that occasion. The most experienced short-hand reporters were unable to follow him. . . . Yet, notwithstanding the rapidity with which Mr. Jeffrey spoke on this occasion, he never so much as faltered once, nor recalled a word which he uttered, to substitute one more suitable for it. . . . His manner . . . was graceful, but it wanted variety. His voice was clear and pleasant; but it had no flexibility in its intonations. He continued and ended in much the same tones as he began. The same monotony characterized his gesticulation.—JAMES GRANT ("Random Recollections").²

An unexpected failure.

In February, 1818, he did what he never did before or since. He stuck in a speech. John Kemble had taken his leave of our stage, and before quitting Edinburgh, about sixty or seventy of his admirers gave him a dinner and a snuff-box. Jeffrey was put into the chair, and had to make the address

¹ The author is describing Jeffrey's first speech in Parliament, in 1831.

² Grant (James). Random Recollections of the House of Commons. 12mo. (Anon.) London, 1836.

previous to the presentation. He began very promisingly, but got confused, and amazed both himself and everybody else, by actually sitting down, and leaving the speech unfinished ; and, until reminded of that part of his duty, not even thrusting the box into the hand of the intended receiver. He afterward told me the reason of this. He had not premeditated the scene, and thought he had nothing to do except in the name of the company to give the box. But as soon as he rose to do this, Kemble, who was beside him, rose also, and with most formidable dignity. This forced Jeffrey to look up to his man ; when he found himself annihilated by the tall tragic god ; who sank him to the earth at every compliment, by obeisances of overwhelming grace and stateliness.—LORD COCKBURN (“Life of Jeffrey”).

An unexpected failure.

When once he had made himself master of a case and its bearings, he was always ready to debate it, even at a moment's warning, however heterogeneous the subject to which he had been tasking his faculties the moment before. This might be owing to a habit which he had in previous conversations with the party or his agent, to ply them with all the arguments that could be brought against them. Often have we known an honest countryman, perplexed by his objections, remonstrate with his attorney for having encouraged him to proceed with a hopeless case, or for having employed a pleader of so desponding a temperament ; and immediately thereafter have we seen his honest face grow momentarily broader and broader, brighter and bright-

The barrister.

*The bar-
rister.*

er, as Jeffrey, on stepping to the bar, proceeded to demonstrate his right in a train of the closest and most irrefragable reasoning.—ANON. (*New Monthly Magazine*, 1831).

*Mental
alertness.*

One instance of his retentive memory, and power of instantaneously passing from one subject to another, has just occurred to us. He had been addressing a jury, after a tedious trial, in a long and argumentative speech. As he sat down, an attorney's clerk pulled him by the gown, and whispered in his ear, that a case in which he was retained had just been called on in the Inner House. "Good God!" said Jeffrey, as they reached the landing-place, and were beginning to descend the stairs, "I have heard nothing of this matter for weeks, and that trial has driven it entirely out of my head;—what is it?" The lad, in no small trepidation, began to recount some of the leading facts, but no sooner had he mentioned the first, than Jeffrey exclaimed—"I know it," and ran over, with the most inconceivable rapidity, all the details, and every leading case that bore upon them. His speech upon the occasion was one of the most powerful he ever delivered.—ANON. (*New Monthly Magazine*, 1831).

The judge.

Notwithstanding one questionable habit, the judicial duties have rarely been better performed than they were by him. His ability need not be mentioned—nor the sensitiveness of his candor—nor his general aptitude for the law. Surpassed, perhaps, by one or two in some of the more mystical depths

of the law of real property, his general legal learning was more than sufficient to enable him, after ordinary argument, to form sound views, and to defend them, even on these subjects. The industry that had turned the vivacity of his youth to account, and had marked all his progress, followed him to the bench. His opinions were always given fully, and with great liveliness, and great felicity of illustration. His patience, for so quick a person, was nearly incredible. He literally never tired of argument. . . . This was partly the result of a benevolent anxiety to make parties certain that they had at least been fully heard; but it also proceeded from his own pleasure in the game. . . .

The judge.

The questionable thing in his judicial manner consisted in an adherence to the same tendency that had sometimes impaired his force at the bar—speaking too often and too long. He had no idea of sitting, like an oracle, silent, and looking wise; and then, having got it all in, announcing the result in as many calm words as were necessary, and in no more. Delighted with the play, instead of waiting passively till the truth should emerge, he put himself, from the very first, into the position of an inquirer, whose duty it was to extract it by active processes. His error lay in not perceiving that it would be much better extracted for him by counsel than it generally can be by a judge. But disbelieving this, or disregarding it, his way was to carry on a running margin of questions, and suppositions, and comments, through the whole length of the argument. . . . As done by Jeffrey, it had every alleviation that such a practice admits of. It was

The judge.

done with great talent ; with perfect gentleness and urbanity ; solely with a desire to reach justice. . . . Accordingly, he was exceedingly popular with everybody, particularly with the bar ; and the judicial character could not be more revered than it was in him by the public.—LORD COCKBURN (" Life of Jeffrey ").

Methods of work.

He never took up his pen till the candles were lit, . . . he did most of his work in those fatal hours of inspiration from ten at night till two or three o'clock in the morning. . . . His manuscript was inexpressibly vile ; for he wrote with great haste, . . . generally used a wretched pen, . . . and altered, erased, and interlined without the slightest thought of the printer or his correspondent. . . . The explanation is, of course, the usual one with men of Jeffrey's temperament and genius. He had a horror and hatred of the work of the desk. . . . His favorite hours of reading were in the morning and in bed, unless he had to deal with a subject of peculiar difficulty, and in that case he read it up . . . at night ; for he had a notion that hints and suggestions, facts and thoughts, illustrations and authorities, picked up promiscuously over-night, assorted themselves in sleep round their proper centres, and thus reappeared in the morning in logical order.—CHARLES PEBODY (*Gentleman's Magazine*, June, 1870).

My father wrote to him, on receiving one of his letters, " My dear Jeffrey We are much obliged by your letter, but should be still more so were it legi-

ble. I have tried to read it from left to right, and Mrs. Sydney from right to left, and we neither of us can decipher a single word of it."—LADY HOLLAND ("Memoirs of Sydney Smith").¹

Bad handwriting.

To those who only knew him in his maturity, there was nothing more prominent in the character of his intellect than its quickness. He seemed to invent arguments, and to pour out views, and to arrive at conclusions, instinctively. Preparation was a thing with which it was thought that so elastic a spirit did not require to be encumbered. Nevertheless, quick though he undoubtedly was, no slow mind was ever aided by steadier industry. If there be any thing valuable in the history of his progress, it seems to me to consist chiefly in the example of meritorious labor which his case exhibits to young men, even of the highest talent. If he had chosen to be idle, no youth would have had a stronger temptation, or a better excuse of that habit. . . . But his early passion for distinction was never separated from the conviction, that in order to obtain it, he must work for it.—LORD COCKBURN ("Life of Jeffrey").

A hard worker.

Among the public characters who were always to be met with at our balls and routs in those days (1807), out of sight and comparison the most distinguished was Mr. Jeffrey. To every one who appreciated his talents, the wonder was, how he could

Much in society.

¹ Holland (Saba, Lady). Memoirs of Sydney Smith. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1855.

*Much in
society.*

reconcile his mode of life in this respect with his literary and professional engagements. But that he did so was very certain. He seemed the gayest of the gay. He was invited every where, tried to make his appearance every where, and, on all such occasions his popularity (if possible) increased. . . . To all appearance he cared not a rush about habits of consecutive application. No one could guess what portion of *his* day was appropriated to literary tasks, nor indeed could have imagined that he really had any such tasks on hand. . . . He had third-rate apartments in a "*land*" situated in Queen State, where, exclusive of the necessary law books and the very newest publications, his entire library consisted of a few motley tatterdemalion volumes, for all the world likest to a set of worn-out school-books, and such perhaps they really were. Truly there appeared no great charm in that home to render it an object of attachment and affection. Its arrangements were not symmetrical nor indicated much attention to comfort. . . . From all this, and other traits which I might adduce, who could have imagined that the gay young barrister was in truth the most adventurous and successful student in town? —R. P. GILLIES ("Memoirs of a Literary Veteran").

Late hours.

It was a delightful journey.¹ Its only defect arose from his inveterate abhorrence of early rising; which compelled us to travel during the hottest part of the day. This aversion to the dawn, unless

¹ A pleasure trip upon the Continent.

when seen before going to bed, lasted his whole life. He very seldom went to sleep so soon as two in the morning, and distrusted all accounts of the early rising virtues.—LORD COCKBURN ("Life of Jeffrey").

Late hours.

He had much the habit of flirting about with women, especially pretty women, much more the both pretty and clever; all in a weakish, mostly dramatic, and wholly theoretic way (his age now fifty gone); would daintily kiss their hands in bidding good-morning, offer his due *homage*, as he phrased it; trip about, half like a lap-dog, half like a human adorer, with speeches pretty and witty, always of trifling import. I have known some women (not the prettiest) take offence at it, and awkwardly draw themselves up, but without the least putting him out. The most took it quietly, kindly, and found an entertainment to themselves in cleverly answering it, as he did in pertly offering it; pertly, yet with something of real reverence, and always in a dexterous light way. . . . An airy environment of this kind was, wherever possible, a coveted charm in Jeffrey's way of life.—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").

Playful gallantry.

Whatever there might be of artificial in Jeffrey's manners,—of a set "company state of mind" and mode of conversation,—there was a warm heart underneath, and an ingenuousness which added captivation to his intellectual graces. He could be absurd enough in his devotion to a clever woman; and he could be highly culpable in drawing out the vanity of a vain one, and then comically making

*Playful
gallantry.*

game of it ; but his better nature was always within call ; and his generosity was unimpeachable in every other respect,—as far as I knew him.—HARRIET MARTINEAU (“Autobiography”).

*Social
preferences.*

His favorite social scenes, next to his strictly private ones, were the more select parties where intellect was combined with cheerfulness, and good talk with simplicity. But though a great critic of social manners, no one was less discomposed by vulgarities or stupidities, if combined with worth, when they fell in his way. No clever talking man could have more tolerance than he had for common-place people ; a class, indeed, to which many of his best friends belonged. I have heard him, when the supercilious were professing to be shocked by such persons, thank God that he had never lost his taste for bad company.—LORD COCKBURN (“Life of Jeffrey”).

*Retirement
and domestic
life.*

With whatever cordiality Jeffrey entered into social scenes, it was always on affection that his real happiness was dependent. . . . As soon as any excitement that kept him up was over, his spirit, though strong, and his disposition, though sprightly, depended on the presence of old familiar friends. He scarcely ever took even a professional journey of a day or two alone without helplessness and discomfort.—LORD COCKBURN (“Life of Jeffrey”).

For my own part, I . . . am a thousand times better pleased with pacing alone on the lovely

sands, than in renewing a London life, in small hot apartments, and listening to the eternal sophistications of indolent coquetry and languid derision. I am every hour more convinced of the error of those who look for happiness in anything but concentrated and tranquil affection ; and the still more miserable error of those who think to lessen the stupidity of a heartless existence, by a laborious course of amusements, and by substituting the gratification of a restless vanity for the exercise of the heart and understanding. If I were to live a hundred years in London, I should never be seduced into that delusion.—LORD JEFFREY (from a Letter of 1806).

*Retirement
and domestic
life.*

The contemplation of the glories of the external world was one of his habitual delights. All men pretend to enjoy scenery, and most men do enjoy it, though many of them only passively ; but with Jeffrey it was indispensable for happiness, if not for existence. He lived in it. The earth, the waters, and especially the sky, supplied him in their aspects with inexhaustible materials of positive luxury, on which he feasted to an extent which those who only knew him superficially could not suspect.'—LORD COCKBURN ("Life of Jeffrey").

*Love of
nature.*

One of his fancies for several years . . . was

¹ Jeffrey's letters to his relations and friends are written in a very free and familiar style, apparently without regard to effect, and these letters strongly confirm Lord Cockburn's statements in regard to Jeffrey's love of nature. They are full of descriptive passages, which show the close and habitual observer of natural beauty.

*Winter
sports.*

to run for a few days to some wild solitude, in the very depth of winter. "I am (to Horner, January 5, 1813) just returned from the top of Ben-Lomond, where I had two shots at an eagle on New Year's Day. Is not that magnificent?"—LORD COCKBURN ("Life of Jeffrey").

*Home life at
Craigcrook.*

With the exception of Abbotsford, there were more interesting strangers there than in any house in Scotland. Saturday, during the summer session of the courts, was always a day of festivity; chiefly, but by no means exclusively, for his friends at the bar, many of whom were under general invitations. . . . The bowling-green was sure to have its matches, in which the host joined with skill and keenness; the garden had its loiterers; . . . the hill, its prospect seekers. The banquet that followed was generous; the wines never spared; but rather too various; mirth unrestrained, except by propriety; the talk always good, but never ambitious; and mere listeners in no disrepute. What can efface these days, or indeed any Craigcrook day, from the recollection of those who had the happiness of enjoying them?—LORD COCKBURN ("Life of Jeffrey").

*Fondness
for animals.*

The only friend, besides his wife, daughter, and servants, that he took with him (to London), was one he often mentions, "*Poor Poll*," a gray and very wise parrot. He was attached to all that sort of domestic companions, and submitted to much banter on account of the soft travelling-basket for the little dog, Witch, and the large cage for this bird.

The hearth-rug and the sofa were seldom free of his dumb pets.—LORD COCKBURN ("Life of Jeffrey").

Mr. Jeffrey shines in mixed company ; he is not good in a *tête-à-tête*. You can only show your wisdom or your wit in general society ; but in private your follies or your weaknesses are not the least interesting topics ; and our critic has neither any of his own to confess, nor does he take delight in hearing those of others. Indeed in Scotland generally, the 'display of personal character, the indulging your whims and humors in the presence of a friend is not much encouraged—every one there is looked upon in the light of a machine or a collection of topics. . . . The accomplished and ingenious person of whom we speak, has been a little infected by the tone of his countrymen—he is too didactic, too pugnacious, too full of electrical shocks, too much like a voltaic battery, and reposes too little on his own excellent good sense, his own love of ease, his cordial frankness of temper and unaffected candor. He ought to have belonged to us !—WILLIAM HAZLITT ("Spirit of the Age").

*Unsatisfactory as a
crony.*

Jeffrey, for the most part, entertained us, when books were under discussion, with the detection of faults, blunders, absurdities, or plagiarisms : Scott took up the matter where he left it, recalled some compensating beauty or excellence for which no credit had been allowed, and by the recitation, perhaps, of one fine stanza, set the poor victim on his

A contrast.

legs again.¹—ANON. (from a letter quoted by Lockhart).

*His own
declarations about
poetry.*

I do not know exactly what to say of Christabel, though with all its perversity and affectation I read it with some pleasure. I do not mean the pleasure of scoffing and ridicule. Indeed I scarcely ever read poetry in that humor, and usually find something to love and admire in work which I could never have courage or conscience to praise. My natural foible is to admire and be pleased too easily, and I am never severe except from effort and reflection. I am afraid some people would not believe this; but you will, when I tell you that I say it quite in earnest.—LORD JEFFREY (from a letter to Moore).

If it were not for my love of beautiful nature and poetry, my heart would have died within me long ago. I never felt before what immeasurable benefactors these same poets are to their kind, and how large a measure, both of actual happiness and prevention of misery they have imparted to the race. I would willingly give up half my fortune, and some little of the fragments of health and bodily enjoyment that remain to me, rather than that Shakspeare should not have lived before me.—LORD JEFFREY (from a letter to Lord Cockburn, 1833).

Mrs. Henry Siddons, a neighbor and intimate friend of the late Lord Jeffrey, who had free license

¹ See p. 75.

to enter his house at all hours unannounced, and come and go as she listed, opened his library door one day very gently, to look if he was there, and saw enough at a glance to convince her that her visit was ill-timed. The hard critic of "The Edinburgh" was sitting in his chair, with his head on the table, in deep grief. As Mrs. Siddons was delicately retiring, in the hope that her entrance had been unnoticed, Jeffrey raised his head, and kindly beckoned her back. Perceiving that his cheek was flushed and his eyes suffused with tears she apologized for her intrusion and begged permission to withdraw. When he found that she was seriously intending to leave him, he rose from his chair, took her by both hands, and led her to a seat.

Sensibility.

Lord Jeffrey (loq.) "Don't go, my dear friend. I shall be right again in another minute."

Mrs. H. Siddons. "I had no idea that you had had any bad news or cause for grief, or I would not have come. Is any one dead?"

Lord Jeffrey. "Yes, indeed. I'm a great goose to have given way so, but I could not help it. You'll be sorry to hear that little Nelly, Boz's little Nelly is dead." The fact was, Jeffrey had just received the last number then out of the *Old Curiosity Shop*, and had been thoroughly overcome by its pathos.—J. C. YOUNG ("Memoir of C. M. Young").

Carlyle, in his "Reminiscences," gives several instances of Jeffrey's liberality. One morning Jeffrey received a letter from William Hazlitt, saying, "Dear Sir, I am dying; can you send me £10, and so consummate your many kindnesses to me?" To

Generosity.

Generosity.

this Jeffrey promptly responded by sending a check for £50. Carlyle says further, "I ought to add that Jeffrey . . . generously offered to confer on me an annuity of £100"—an offer which was declined, although Jeffrey showed his earnestness in the matter by urging the acceptance of this gift, upon several occasions. "Jeffrey's beneficence," says Carlyle, "was undoubted, and his gifts to poor people in distress were a known feature of his way of life." Mr. Froude, in his "Thomas Carlyle: a History of the First Forty Years of his Life," gives the following account of Jeffrey's conduct in regard to the annuity which he wished to bestow upon Carlyle: "Jeffrey's anxiety to be of use did not end in recommendations to Napier. He knew how the Carlyles were situated in money matters. He knew that they were poor, and that their poverty had risen from a voluntary surrender of means which were properly their own, but which they would not touch while Mrs. Welsh was alive. He knew also that Carlyle had educated, and was still supporting, his brother out of his own slender earnings. He saw, as he supposed, a man of real brilliancy and genius weighed down and prevented from doing justice to himself by a drudgery which deprived him of the use of his more commanding talents; and with a generosity the merit of which was only exceeded by the delicacy with which the offer was made, he proposed that Carlyle should accept a small annuity from him. Here again I regret that I am forbidden to print the admirable letter in which Jeffrey conveyed his desire, to which Carlyle in his own mention of this transaction has done but scanty

justice. The whole matter, he said, should be an entire secret between them. He would tell no one—not even his wife. He bade Carlyle remember that he too would have been richer if he had not been himself a giver where there was less demand upon his liberality. He ought not to wish for a monopoly of generosity, and if he was really a religious man he must do as he would be done to; nor, he added, would he have made the offer did he not feel that in similar circumstances he would have freely accepted it himself. To show his confidence he enclosed 50*l.*, which he expected Carlyle to keep, and desired only to hear in reply that they had both done right.”

Generosity.

In Thomas Constable's memoir of his father,¹ a letter from Jeffrey to Hazlitt is printed, from which the following extract is to the present purpose: “I am concerned to find your health is not so good as it should be, and that you could take more care of it if your finances were in better order. We cannot let a man of genius suffer in this way, and I hope you are in no serious danger. I take the liberty of enclosing £100, a great part of which I shall owe you in a few weeks, and the rest you shall pay me back in reviews whenever you can do so without putting yourself to any uneasiness. If you really want another £100 tell me so plainly, and it shall be heartily at your service.”

The severest of critics (as he has been sometimes termed) is the best-natured of men. Whatever

¹ Constable (Thomas). Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents. 3 vols., 8vo. Edinburgh, 1873.

*Friendly
estimates by
several con-
tempo-
raries.*

*Hazlitt's
opinion.*

there may be of wavering or indecision in Mr. Jeffrey's reasoning, or of harshness in his critical decisions, in his disposition there is nothing but simplicity and kindness. He is a person that no one knows without esteeming, and who both in his public connections and private friendships, shows the same manly uprightness and unbiassed independence of spirit. At a distance, in his writings, or even in his manner, there may be something to excite a little uneasiness and apprehension: in his conduct there is nothing to except against. He is a person of strict integrity himself, without pretence or affectation; and knows how to respect this quality in others, without prudery or intolerance. He can censure a friend or a stranger, and serve him effectually at the same time. He expresses his disapprobation, but not as an excuse for closing up the avenues of his liberality. He is a Scotchman without one particle of hypocrisy, of cant, of servility, or selfishness in his composition. He has not been spoiled by fortune—has not been tempted by power—is firm without violence, friendly without weakness—a critic and even-tempered, a casuist and an honest man—and amidst the toils of his profession and the distractions of the world, retains the gayety, the unpretending carelessness and simplicity of youth.—WILLIAM HAZLITT ("Spirit of the Age").

*Carlyle's
opinion.*

I used to find in him a finer talent than any he has evidenced in writing. This was chiefly when he got to speak Scotch, and gave me anecdotes of old Scotch Braxfield and vernacular (often enough

but not always cynical) curiosities of that type, which he did with a greatness of gusto quite peculiar to the topic, with a fine and deep sense of humor, of real comic mirth, much beyond what was noticeable in him otherwise, not to speak of the perfection of the mimicry, which itself was something. I used to think to myself, "Here is a man whom they have kneaded into the shape of an Edinburgh reviewer, and clothed the soul of in Whig formulas and blue and yellow; but he might have been a beautiful Goldoni too, or something better in that kind, and have given us *comedies* and aërial pictures true and poetic of human life in a far other way." There was something of Voltaire in him, something even in bodily features; those bright-beaming, swift, and piercing hazel eyes, with their accompaniment of rapid keen expression in the other lineaments of face, resembled one's notion of Voltaire; and in the voice, too, there was a fine half-plangent kind of metallic ringing tone which used to remind me of what I fancied Voltaire's voice might have been: "*voix sombre et majestueuse*," Duvernet calls it.—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").

*Carlyle's
opinion.*

All accounts agree in representing him as in private life one of the kindest and gentlest of mortals, ever surrounded by the aroma of a delicate sense of honor and a transparent truthfulness, equable in temper, in conversation full of a playful ease, and, with even his ordinary talk, ever glittering in an unpremeditated wit, "that loved to play, not wound." Never was there a man more thoroughly beloved

*Hugh
Miller's
opinion.*

*Hugh
Miller's
opinion.*

by his friends. Though his term of life exceeded the allotted three score and ten years, his fine intellect . . . was to the last untouched by decay. Only four days previous to that of his death he sat upon the bench ; only a few months ago he furnished an article for his old "Review," distinguished by all the nice discernment and acumen of his most vigorous days. It is further gratifying to know, that though infected in youth and middle age by the wide-spread infidelity of the first French revolution, he was for at least the last few years of his life of a different spirit. He read much and often in his Bible ; and he is said to have studied especially, and with much solicitude, the writings of St. Paul.—HUGH MILLER ("Essays").¹

*Macaulay's
opinion.*

When I compare him with Sydney and myself, I feel, with humility perfectly sincere, that his range is immeasurably wider than ours. And this is only as a writer. But he is not only a writer ; he has been a great advocate, and he is a great judge. Take him all in all, I think him more nearly an universal genius than any man of our time. . . . Jeffrey has tried nothing in which he has not succeeded, except Parliamentary speaking ; and there he obtained what to any other man would have been great success, and disappointed his hearers only because their expectations were extravagant.—T. B. MACAULAY, 1843 ("Correspondence of Macvey Napier").²

¹ Miller (Hugh). *Essays*. 16mo. Edinburgh, 1862.

² Napier (Macvey). *Selections from the Correspondence of*. Edited by his Son. 8vo. London, 1879.

Jeffrey, whom flattery, success, and himself cannot spoil, or taint that sweet, generous nature—keen, instant, unsparing and true as a rapier; the most painstaking and honest-working of all clever men.—DR. JOHN BROWN ("Horæ Subsecivæ").

*Dr.
Brown's
opinion.*

My Edinburgh expedition has given me so much to say that, unless I write off some of it before I come home, I shall talk you all to death, and be voted a bore in every house which I visit. I will commence with Jeffrey himself. I had almost forgotten his person; and, indeed, I should not wonder if even now I were to forget it again. He has twenty faces, almost as unlike each other as my father's to Mr. Wilberforce's, and infinitely more unlike to each other than those of near relatives often are; infinitely more unlike, for example, than those of the two Groats. When absolutely quiescent, reading a paper, or hearing a conversation in which he takes no interest, his countenance shows no indication whatever of intellectual superiority of any kind. But as soon as he is interested, and opens his eyes upon you, the change is like magic. There is a flash in his glance, a violent contortion in his frown, an exquisite humor in his sneer, and a sweetness and brilliancy in his smile, beyond anything that ever I witnessed. A person who had only seen him in one state would not know him if he saw him in another. For he has not, like Brougham, marked features, which in all moods of mind remain unaltered. The mere outline of his face is insignificant. The expression is everything; and such power and variety of expression I never

*A general
view.*

*Macaulay's
description.*

*Macaulay's
description.*

saw in any human countenance, not even in that of the most celebrated actors. I can conceive that Garrick may have been like him. I have seen several pictures of Garrick, none resembling another, and I have heard Hannah More speak of the extraordinary variety of countenance by which he was distinguished, and the unequalled radiance and penetration of his eye. The voice and delivery of Jeffrey resemble his face. He possesses considerable power of mimicry, and rarely tells a story without imitating several different accents. His familiar tone, his declamatory tone, and his pathetic tone are quite different things. Sometimes Scotch predominates in his pronunciation; sometimes it is imperceptible. Sometimes his utterance is snappish and quick to the last degree; sometimes it is remarkable for rotundity and mellowness. I can easily conceive that two people who had seen him on different days might dispute about him as the travellers in the fable disputed about the chameleon.

In one thing, as far as I have observed, he is always the same; and that is the warmth of his domestic affections. . . . The flow of his kindness is quite inexhaustible. Not five minutes pass without some fond expression or caressing gesture to his wife or his daughter. He has fitted up a study for himself; but he never goes into it. Law papers, reviews, whatever he has to write, he writes in the drawing-room, or in his wife's boudoir. When he goes to another part of the country on a retainer he takes them in the carriage with him. I do not wonder that he should be a good husband; for his wife is a very amiable woman. But I was surprised to

see a man so keen and sarcastic, so much of a scoffer, pouring himself out with such simplicity and tenderness in all sorts of affectionate nonsense. Through our whole journey to Perth he kept up a sort of mock quarrel with his daughter ; attacked her about novel reading, laughed her into a pet, kissed her out of it, and laughed her into it again. She and her mother absolutely idolize him, and I do not wonder at it.

*Macaulay's
description.*

His conversation is very like his countenance and his voice, of immense variety ; sometimes whimsically brilliant and rhetorical almost beyond the license of private discourse. He has many interesting anecdotes, and tells them very well. He is a shrewd observer ; and so fastidious that I am not surprised at the awe in which many people seem to stand when in his company. Though not altogether free from affectation himself, he has a peculiar loathing for it in other people, and a great talent for discovering and exposing it. He has a particular contempt, in which I most heartily concur with him, for the *fadaises* of blue-stockings literature, for the mutual flatteries of coteries, the handing about of *vers de société*, the albums, the conversaziones, and all the other nauseous trickeries of the Sewards, Hayleys, and Sothebys. I am not quite sure that he has escaped the opposite extreme, and that he is not a little too desirous to appear rather a man of the world, an active lawyer, or an easy, careless gentleman, than a distinguished writer. I must own that when Jeffrey and I were by ourselves, he talked much and very well on literary topics. His kindness and hospitality to me were, indeed, beyond

*Macaulay's
description.*

description ; . . . I liked every thing but the hours. . . . Jeffrey, indeed, never goes to bed till sleep comes on him overpoweringly, and never rises till forced up by business or hunger. He is extremely well in health ; so that I could not help suspecting him of being very hypochondriac ; for all his late letters to me have been filled with lamentations about his various maladies. His wife told me, when I congratulated her on his recovery, that I must not absolutely rely on all his accounts of his own diseases. I really think that he is, on the whole, the youngest-looking man of fifty that I know, at least when he is animated.—T. B. MACAULAY (from a letter of 1828).¹

*In Boston,
1814—
George
Ticknor's
account.*

You are to imagine . . . before you a short, stout, little gentleman, about five and a half feet high, with a very red face, black hair, and black eyes.² You are to suppose him to possess a very gay and animated countenance, and you are to see in him all the restlessness of a will-o'-wisp, and all that fitful irregularity in his movements which you have heretofore appropriated to the pasteboard Merry Andrews whose limbs are jerked about with a wire. These you are to interpret as the natural indication

¹ Trevelyan (George Otto). *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1876.

² This admirable sketch of Jeffrey was given by Mr. Ticknor in a letter to a friend, in February, 1814, the great critic having recently been a guest in Boston. The editor would express his appreciation of the courtesy of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., who have permitted him to make this long extract from one of their copyrighted books.

of the impetuous and impatient character which a further acquaintance develops.

He enters a room with a countenance so satisfied, and a step so light and almost fantastic, that all your previous impressions of the dignity and severity of the "Edinburgh Review" are immediately put to flight, and, passing at once to the opposite extreme, you might, perhaps, imagine him to be frivolous, vain, and supercilious. He accosts you, too, with a freedom and familiarity which may, perhaps, put you at your ease, and render conversation uncere-
monious; but which, as I observed in several instances, were not very tolerable to those who had always been accustomed to the delicacy and decorum of refined society. Mr. Jeffrey, therefore, as I remarked, often suffered from the prepossessions of those he met, before any regular conversation commenced, and almost before the tones of his voice were heard. It is not possible, however, to be long in his presence without understanding something of his real character,—for the same promptness and assurance which mark his entrance into a room carry him at once into conversation. The moment a topic is suggested—no matter what or by whom—he comes forth, and the first thing you observe is his singular fluency.

He bursts upon you with a torrent of remarks, and you are for some time so much amused with his earnestness and volubility, that you forget to ask yourself whether they have either appropriateness or meaning. When, however, you come to consider his remarks closely, you are surprised to find that, notwithstanding his prodigious rapidity, the current

*George
Ticknor's
account.*

*George
Ticknor's
account.*

of his language never flows faster than the current of his thoughts. You are surprised to discover that he is never, like other impetuous speakers, driven to amplification and repetition in order to gain time to collect and arrange his ideas ; you are surprised to find that, while his conversation is poured forth in such a fervor and tumult of eloquence that you can scarcely follow or comprehend it, it is still as compact and logical as if he were contending for a victory in the schools or for a decision from the bench.

After all this, however, you do not begin to understand Mr. Jeffrey's character ; for it is not until you become interested in the mere discussion, until you forget his earnestness, his volubility, and his skill, that you begin to feel something of the full extent of his powers. You do not, till then, see with how strong and steady a hand he seizes the subject, and with what ease, as well as dexterity, he turns and examines it on every side. You are not, until then, convinced that he but plays with what is the labor of ordinary minds, and that half his faculties are not called into exercise by what you at first supposed would tax his whole strength. And, after all, you are able to estimate him, not by what you witness, for he is always above a topic which can be made the subject of conversation,—but by what you imagine he would be able to do if he were excited by a great and difficult subject and a powerful adversary.

With all this, he preserves in your estimation a transparent simplicity of character. You are satisfied that he does nothing for effect and show ; you

see that he never chooses the subject, and never *leads* the conversation in such a way as best to display his own powers and acquirements. You see that he is not ambitious of being thought a wit; and that, when he has been most fortunate in his argument or illustration, he never looks round, as some great men do, to observe what impression he has produced upon his hearers. In short, you could not be in his presence an hour without being convinced that he has neither artifice nor affectation; that he does not talk from the pride of skill or of victory, but because his mind is full to overflowing, and conversation is his relief and pleasure.

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But, notwithstanding everybody saw and acknowledged these traits in Mr. Jeffrey's character, he was very far from winning the good opinion of all. There were still not a few who complained that he was supercilious, and that he thought himself of a different and higher order from those he met; that he had been used to dictate until he was unwilling to listen, and that he had been fed upon admiration until it had become common food, and he received it as a matter of course.

There is some ground for this complaint; but I think the circumstances of the case should take its edge from censure. It seems to me that Mr. Jeffrey has enough of that amiable feeling from which politeness and the whole system of the *petite morale* springs, but that he has not learned the necessary art of distributing it in judicious proportions. He shows the same degree of deference to every one he meets; and therefore, while he flatters by his civility those who are little accustomed to attention

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from their superiors, he disappoints the reasonable expectations of those who have received the homage of all around them until it has become a part of their just expectations and claims.

This, at least, was the distinction here. The young men and the literary men all admired him ; the old men and the politicians found their opinions and dignity too little regarded by the impetuous stranger. The reasons for this are to be sought, I should think, in his education and constitution ; and I was, therefore, not disposed to like him the less for his defect. I was not disposed to claim from a man who must have passed his youth in severe and solitary study, and who was not brought into that class of society which refines and fashions all the external expressions of character, until his mind and habits were matured, and he was brought there to be admired and to dictate,—I was not disposed to claim from *him* that gentleness and delicacy of manners which are acquired only by early discipline, and which are most obvious in those who have received, perhaps, their very character and direction from early collision with their superiors in station or talents.

Besides, even admitting that Mr. Jeffrey could have been early introduced into refined society, still I do not think his character would have been much changed ; or, if it had been, that it would have been changed for the better. I do not think it would have been possible to have drilled him into the strict forms of society and *bien-séance* without taking from him something we should be very sorry to lose.

There seems to me to be a prodigious rapidity in his mind which could not be taken away without diminishing its force ; and yet it is this rapidity, I think, which often offended some of my elder friends, in the form of impatience and abruptness. He has, too, a promptness and decision which contribute, no doubt, to the general power of his mind, and certainly could not be repressed without taking away much of that zeal which carries him forward in his labors, and gives so lively an interest to his conversation ; yet you could not be an hour in his presence without observing that his promptness and decision very often make him appear peremptory and assuming.

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account.*

In short, he has such a *familiar* acquaintance with almost all the subjects of human knowledge, and consequently such an intimate conviction that he is right, and such a habit of carrying his point ; he passes, as it seems to me, with such intuitive rapidity from thought to thought, and subject to subject,—that his mind is completely occupied, and satisfied with its own knowledge and operations, and has no attention left to bestow on the tones and manners of expression. He is, in fact, so much absorbed with the weightier matters of the discussion,—with the subject, the argument, and the illustrations,—that he forgets the small tithe of humility and forbearance which he owes to every one with whom he converses ; and I was not one of those who ever wished to correct his forgetfulness, or remind him of his debt.

You will gather from these desultory and diffuse remarks, that I was very much delighted with Mr.

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Jeffrey. . . . All that he knew—and, as far as I could judge, his learning is more extensive than that of any man I ever met—seemed completely incorporated and identified with his own mind; and I cannot, perhaps, give you a better idea of the readiness with which he commanded it, and of the consequent facility and fluency of his conversation, than by saying, with Mr. Ames, that “he poured it out like water.”—GEORGE TICKNOR (“Life, etc., of George Ticknor”).

*The ruling
passion.*

On Tuesday, the 22d of January, he was in court for the last time. He was then under no apparent illness. . . . But he was taken ill that night of bronchitis and feverish cold; though seemingly not worse than he had often been. On the evening of Friday, the 25th, he dictated a letter to the Lord President, saying that there was no chance of his being in court that week. . . . On the same evening he dictated the last letter he ever wrote to the Emperors. In reference to his old critical habits, parts of it are very curious. It was long, and gave a full and clear description of the whole course of his illness, from which he expected to recover, but had made up his mind not to continue longer on the bench. “I don’t think I have had any proper sleep for the last three nights, and I employ portions of them in a way that seems to assume the existence of a sort of dreamy state, lying quite consciously in my bed with my eyes alternately shut and open,” enjoying curious visions. He saw “a part of a proof sheet of a new edition of the Apocrypha, and all about Baruch and the Maccabees. I read a good

deal in this with much interest," etc., "and a huge Californian newspaper, full of all manner of odd advertisements, some of which amused me much by their novelty. I had then prints of the vulgar old comedies before Shakespeare's time, which were very disgusting." "I could conjure up the spectrum of a close printed political paper filled with discussions on free trade, protection, and colonies, such as one sees in the Times, the Economist, and the Daily News. I read the ideal copies with a good deal of pain and difficulty, owing to the smallness of the type, but with great interest, and, I believe, often for more than an hour at a time ; forming a judgment of their merits with great freedom and acuteness, and often saying to myself, ' This is very cleverly put, but there is a fallacy in it, for so and so.' "

*The ruling
passion.*

He died on the evening of the next day, Saturday, the 26th of January, 1850, in his seventy-seventh year.—LORD COCKBURN ("Life of Jeffrey").

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